# EUCHARISTIA

JOSEPH KRAMP, S. J.

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Rev. William Cantwell

# EUCHARISTIA

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# EUCHARISTIA

## ESSAYS ON
## EUCHARISTIC LITURGY AND DEVOTION

BY

JOSEPH KRAMP, S. J.

*Translated From the Second and Third German Editions (Freiburg, Herder, 1926)*

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*With a Foreword By His Grace*
*THE ARCHBISHOP OF ST. PAUL*

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*TO ALL CHRIST-LOVING, GENEROUS-HEARTED*
*SELF-SACRIFICING SOULS, THIS BOOK IS*
*DEDICATED*
*BY THE AUTHOR*

# INTRODUCTORY

Father Kramp's book on "The Eucharist," well known in German to those who are following the recent most interesting and important liturgical movement on the Continent, now appears in English for the first time. It is primarily a book of devotion, breathing the spirit of Catholic life, and thus poles apart from the controversial atmosphere which perforce pervades much of the Eucharistic literature written in our contentious and disputing times. With a wealth of historical background, it considers the Eucharist as the principle of that more abundant life Christ came on earth to bring to men. It is today as it was in the beginning of the Church's existence, the Sacrifice, the Sacrament, the Presence by which the Church's life is renewed, her vigor imparted, her perpetuity assured.

The whole of the Eucharistic content as both a mystery of faith and a gift of God is comprehended only when we consider the Eucharist from this threefold point of view. At one or another period in the Church's history, undue stress has been laid now upon one, now upon another, of these significant relations of the Eucharist. Confusion, disorder, abuse have inevitably resulted from any interference with the divine plan of Its institution.

Father Kramp thus labors to maintain among the lovers of the Eucharist today the nice balance of the Church's doctrinal teaching of that ever renewed and never ending Sacrifice of Calvary, whose High Priest is forever making intercession for us, with whose voice from the cross the Ecclesia Orans forever blends her own in prayer, whose broken body and quickening blood in the mystic rite of a Sacrament seal us and sign us unto life eternal, and, thus, even amid the shadows and the riddles of our earthly existence, comfort us with the real and abiding Presence of Christ.

There is refreshment and inspiration in these pages that will well repay perusal.

✠ Austin Dowling,
*Archbishop of Saint Paul.*

Holy Thursday, 1926.

## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

I consider it a great privilege to be able to present to the English-reading public this translation of Father Kramp's *"Eucharistia."* It is a very significant book which deserves as wide a circulation in America as it has in Europe. The reader will, I hope, become aware of the place which it has in the present revival of the liturgy. The liturgical movement is only beginning in America (see the *Report* of the Catholic Educational Convention of 1925 in the *Bulletin of the Catholic Educational Association,* Columbus, Ohio, 1925, Vol. XXII, No. 1, page 670). It is my special hope that this translation of *"Eucharistia"* will help to promote the movement in our country. For the same reason I take occasion to call the reader's attention to the recent translation of another of Father Kramp's books, *"The Liturgical Sacrifice of the New Law"* (St. Louis, Herder, 1926,) and also to the publications of the recently established *Liturgical Press* of St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota, an undertaking which I pray that God may richly bless. I humbly dedicate my work of translation and the good that it may do, to Mary, the Mother of our Lord, and under her patronage to one other who rests in Christ.

W. B.

THE ST. PAUL SEMINARY,
FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION, 1926.

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

We behold the first flowering of a new eucharistic and liturgical spring-time, with all its prospects, promises, possibilities—and contingencies. The eucharistic devotion of recent times, so powerfully promoted by the well-known decrees of Pope Pius X regarding Holy Communion, began as a devotion to the Blessed Sacrament through Holy Communion. As such it was something of a departure from the former and more restricted way of approaching our eucharistic Lord merely by adoration; it added to union by way of prayer, or spiritual communion, the real sacramental communion. From this beginning it soon found its course leading, as it inevitably must, in the direction of liturgical devotion. Holy Communion came to be better understood as an organic part of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. And hence it is that the faithful again take deep interest as of old in questions regarding the Holy Sacrifice and the liturgy of the Mass.

We demand today the restoration of Christendom; not merely a superficial Christianity, a facade Christianity, not merely "the essentials of Christianity"—but Christian life whole and entire, with all its vital truth and power. And as to the Eucharist, we want not merely one aspect of it, however good that may be, and not merely both parts of the double aspect of eucharistic worship, but the very fulness of eucharistic

life, the Eucharist itself for all that it is. Now, the Eucharist has its origin and its culmination in the Holy Mass. We want the stream at its source, in all its first purity and power; we want the summit of the mountain with its heavenward direction and its far-reaching horizon.

This little book would fain be a companion and guide in a eucharistic way. It came to be written out of the author's own desire to give to eucharistic and liturgical life the place and purpose in his own soul which our eucharistic Lord in His goodness intended it should have. It is an inward and outward record of the pursuit of this ideal. Perhaps then it may serve to point out the way to those others who are interested in present eucharistic questions and who recognize the necessity of uniting the eucharistic and the liturgical.

It may be noted that Chapters III and V appeared originally as articles in *Stimmen der Zeit,* as also did the main ideas of Chapter IV.

A new edition has been demanded within twelve months from the date of the original edition and this has afforded me the opportunity to revise the entire book and to add a seventh chapter.

JOSEPH KRAMP, S. J.

MUNICH, 1926.

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## Chapter I

### The Riches of Eucharistic Life

*"I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly."* (John, 10:10.)

These words of our Lord refer directly to the supernatural life of grace. God gave that life to man in Paradise as a birthday endowment for his earthly sojourn. And thus man, the best of all God's creatures, was elevated above the merely natural order and given to share in the very life of God Himself.

The gift implied an obligation. In a tragic hour man lost this precious endowment. And so great was the loss in God's eyes that thereafter all men counted as not living—however much they might still seem to themselves to possess health of body or wealth of mind. Without the Redeemer man could no more have this higher life. Christ came to give it back to us, to make us once more true children of life. Since then we live again.

Christ came not merely to give us life but to pour forth life abundantly, a copious stream of life, the fulness of life, nay, if we take the ordinary meaning

of the word He used (περισσον), life beyond all measure, beyond our deserts and needs and potencies, life in reckless prodigality and profusion.

Should we think of the Eucharist as a necessity of life or as abundance of life? Without the Eucharist would not Christianity long ago have vanished like a stream in the tropical sands?[1] Without the Eucharist would there be any life of grace remaining in us? Is it not for us to say what ways and means the almighty God may choose. But this we surely know, that the Christian religion as it is given us makes the Eucharist the basis and the center of life. And at the same time it contains the fulness of life and pours it forth abundantly.

The Eucharist is the last and richest outpouring of divine life. To it apply very truly the words of the evangelist: "Before the festival day of the Pasch, Jesus, knowing that His hour was come that He should pass out of the world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end." (John, 13:1.)

[1] By "Eucharist" is meant the whole of eucharistic life, including the three aspects of sacrifice, sacrament (communion), and real presence. In particular instances the context will show which aspect is chiefly in mind. The word "Eucharist" is thus used intentionally as the title of the book and throughout its pages because there is no other word that covers so well the entire scope of the subject.

Sheeben has well expressed the profound thought which here suggests itself. All life has the power of generation, it reproduces itself, it craves for development. God the Father imparts His divine nature to the Son, the express image of His divine substance, and from both proceeds by mutual love another like to Them, the Holy Spirit. The Son brought His divine nature down to earth and joined it with human nature in the womb of the immaculate Virgin Mary, and thus the God-man dwelt and worked among us. And when the time came for Him to re-enter His heavenly glory, He desired not to leave us without a parting gift, a precious legacy, none other than Himself in a new kind of presence on earth by which He might continue to live among us and to impart His life to us forever. Hidden not merely under the guise of man, the form of a servant, but under a lifeless and yet life-telling symbol, the form and vesture of bread, He abides with us ever since that hour when He loved us "unto the end."

He wished to dwell forever with those whom He had made His adopted brothers and sisters in grace. They who walk as children of God, in plain exterior, in their frail humanity, their supernatural merit and dignity unseen, are to have Him for their companion,

unspeakably higher in dignity but yet lowlier in guise and more fragile in form.

In the Eucharist God exhausted, one might almost say, His creative power, imparting Himself to the utmost end that life can reach, infusing His divine life even into inanimate nature. And yet, behold, He thus gives life anew, establishing a new center of vital forces. He abides with us as "the Bread of Life," the food of those who are faithful and true. So precious in His sight is this restored life of grace in man, that He Himself undertakes the service of maintaining and developing it, working miracles and mysteries upon His own person to make sure that the divine life in His children will grow and flourish.

He once used the parable of the vine and the branches to illustrate the way in which He imparts to us the divine life of grace. And a little later He distributed the fruit of the vine in the mystery of the Eucharist. More than grace He cannot give, not even in the Eucharist; for divine grace is the highest gift that God can give to man. But to manifest the love by which He gives His grace, He gives it in His own person as the food of our soul. No ordinary symbol such as sufficed for the other sacraments can adequately express the fullness of this gift of grace. Indeed, nothing is adequate and so He comes Himself.

And thus He abides and works in the souls of "His own," He leads them as a good shepherd into rich and pleasant pastures, He guides their growth to Christian maturity, to the likeness of Himself and of His Father.

Hence the Eucharist is Christ still living among men; not only because He is really present in the Eucharist as God and man, but equally because by the grace of the Eucharist He makes all His brethern the one body of the mystic Christ. For that is the primary purpose and effect of His Eucharistic presence and work among us: living union with Himself. His purpose in the Eucharist is not merely to dwell among men as one among many more. He purposes to live for them and in them as the head of one body; not merely to be one among them but to be all of them together in one organic whole. Thus it was not by accident that in the early Christian days, the one same word, "communion," was chosen to mean both the partaking of the eucharistic banquet and the corporate brotherhood of the church.[2]

[2] Indeed it appears that the *κοινωνια των αγιων* the communio sanctorum (compare I Cor. 10:16) meant originally "communion with" or "participation in the holy things," i.e., in the Eucharist. St. Augustine thus explains the term without reference to its occurrence in the Creed. The understanding of it as meaning "the Church" is also very old and continues down to the time of St. Canisius, in such wise that "Communion of Saints" in the Creed is understood as in apposition with "the Holy Catholic Church."

Shall we then say: The Eucharist is Christ; or, Christ lives in the Eucharist; or Christ gives life through the Eucharist?

All of these are actually and equally true. For to live means to maintain oneself from within outwardly and in blessed fruitfulness to reproduce one's kind. Life is love and love is life, and where the life is divine there also love divine poured out in unspeakable abundance.

"With desire have I desired to eat this Pasch with you" (Luke, 22:15). How the purpose to institute this mystery of love must have absorbed the mind of Jesus as the hour of parting drew nigh! What deep concern, what tender solicitude, what ardent desire, were contained in that chalice of salvation which He gave to His apostles as the dearest legacy of His love.

"This do ye . . . for the commemoration of Me" (I Cor., 11:25). He did not need to say this to assure the remembrance of Him. He said it in order to prescribe the perpetual repetition of His deed of the Last Supper. True love does not forget. That hour of uttermost self-oblation, that love "unto the end" would always remain vivid in the minds of the Apostles. If that first Communion had been yours and mine we would never forget it; its first fervor would endure throughout our life. But the Last Supper itself was a

personal experience and could be a personal memory only for the Twelve. And therefore St. Paul did well to remind the faithful: "As often as you shall eat this bread and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord until He come" (I Cor., 11:26).

Thus the Eucharist is a reminder of the passion of the Lord, a living memorial of love unto death. In all the liturgies of the Church, immediately after the Consecration comes the "anamnesis": "Wherefore, O Lord, we Thy servants, as also Thy holy people, calling to mind the blessed passion of the same Christ Thy Son, and also His resurrection from the dead and His glorious ascension into heaven, offer unto Thy most excellent majesty, of Thy gifts and presents, a pure Host, a holy Host, a spotless Host, the holy Bread of life eternal and the Chalice of everlasting salvation."[3]

How can we help but think of Calvary and the great drama of redemption when here that self-same body which suffered for us is made present on our altars, when here that blood flows mystically which there was visibly shed for our redemption, when we renew in a wonderful way that great sacrifice in which the

[3] Canon of the Roman Mass.

precious life of Christ was offered to the Most High.[4] But after the passion come the resurrection and the ascension and Christ goes back to the glory of His Father, pledging the future glory that is promised to us. And because that is the end and goal of earthly life—for Christ and for us—the commemoration does not stop with what is past. For by the Eucharist the past is made present and the veil of the future is lifted so that we may glimpse the joy of our holy hope.

The eucharistic life of Jesus reaches back into the far distance and opens vistas of the hidden future; fulness of life, vast, unmeasured and boundless, such as none but God can know.

[4] The Eucharist is more than a mere remembrance of the supreme hours of redemption—Christ Himself saw to that. He instituted the Eucharist in such way as to make it no mere remembrance but a re-presentation and renewal of those hours. The Council of Trent used the word repraesentatio, to re-present, to offer again; and the Roman Catechism uses the word instauratio, renewal.

The re-presentation of the historical Christ in the mystical Christ occurs above all and repeatedly in the holy Mass. The Eucharist is essentially oblation—a gift to God—a gift both actually and symbolically on the part of the Christian congregation which offers Christ and itself in union with Him.

The past is made present and the present is joined with the past in vital unity. The Christian congregation, offering its Gift and itself, cannot perfect its oblation save by making present that past hour when "love unto the end" was shown forth toward the Father and toward mankind, that is, by vital union with the mystical Christ, by an organic ingrowing into His own love and self-sacrifice and an ascension to the Father in union with the ever re-present Christ. In regard to the recent use of the word "mysterium" in this case, see my opinion in *Die Opferanschauungen der römischen Messliturgie*, Regensburg, Pustet, 1924, pp. 299-305.

The riches of the eucharistic life of Jesus are poured into the deepest recesses of our soul, so that we may speak also of the riches of our own eucharistic life. We Christians actually live by the Eucharist and in the Eucharist and for the Eucharist; we live a eucharistic life both individually and corporately in the Church, both receiving and imparting by an interaction which goes on between ourself and our fellowmen and between ourself and God. The Eucharist, like the sun in the planetary system, is the center of all our religious life.

The Roman Catechism tells us that the Eucharist was instituted: first, to be the heavenly food of the soul, and second, to furnish the Church with a perpetual sacrifice. These two considerations cover the whole field of this reciprocal taking and giving in our religious life.

The Eucharist is the food of the soul's supernatural life. The whole stream of finite life is constantly supplied and maintained from the primary source of all being. And to conserve and increase the supernatural life of grace in us, God devised the Eucharist.

A moment's thought will show to what considerable extent all the sacraments are subsidiary to the Eucharist. Baptism and Confirmation establish the

life of grace in us, creating that union of the soul with God which reaches a climax in the Eucharist. Penance as a sacrament of the dead, and in some cases Extreme Unction, by taking away sin restores our claims to the Eucharist. Holy Orders assures the permanence of the Eucharist. Matrimony is an image of that wedding of Christ and His Church which appears most significantly in the Eucharist. All the sacraments give graces for the various circumstances of life; the Eucharist, the food of the soul, sustains and invigorates the very life of grace itself. Thus, truly, we live *by* the Eucharist.

"I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that if any man eat of it he may not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread he shall live forever; and the bread which I will give is My flesh for the life of the world. . . . Amen, amen, I say unto you: except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life and I will raise him up in the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh and

drinketh My blood abideth in Me and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me" (John, 6:48). How could any words state more emphatically the vital necessity of the Eucharist or urge more convincingly the reality of life it gives?

Verily we have on our altars "the bread of the strong and the wine that germinates virgins," the fountain-spring of virtuous life and especially of those theological virtues that directly unite the soul with God.

"Mystery of faith," says the Church at the moment of the Consecration, and bends the knee in adoration of the eucharistic Saviour. There is, indeed, no mystery of our faith greater than this one of the Eucharist in its connection with the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation. It is the latest and dearest outpouring of the divine life.

And therefore the doctrine of the Eucharist, from the day of its first revelation to the present, has always been a cardinal point of Christian faith. What Simeon said of the Child Jesus may also be said of the Eucharist: "This Child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted . . . that out of many hearts

thoughts may be revealed" (Luke, 2:34). At our Lord's very first promise of the Eucharist division appeared among His hearers and even among His chosen disciples. "After this many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him" (John, 6:67). What our Lord said in a more general sense applies particularly in the case of the Eucharist: "No man can come to Me unless it be given him by My Father" (John, 6:66).

The Eucharist is the rock of our hope. For it is Christ Himself, Who rose from the dead, Who reigns in the glory of His Father, Who suffers and dies no more. It is Christ, Who has fixed our hope and expectation in the life to come and Whose presence among us is the perpetual accent of immortality: "Have confidence; I have overcome the world" (John, 16:33).

And if it is true that nothing will arouse our love so much as love that is shown to us, then surely our love of God should be kindled by the Eucharist and our whole life enflamed. For the Eucharist is Christ, our divine Redeemer, Who has made us once more the children of God, Who daily renews the master-deed of His love upon our altars, Who nourishes our soul with His own personal love, with His own Body and Blood. In the Eucharist God has set up His tabernacle in our

midst to comfort and encourage us and to attract our frail and fickle hearts by the mighty lure of this mystery of grace and power.

It was the Eucharist that gave to the martyrs that heroic courage by which they advanced without hesitation to do battle for the faith even unto death. The Eucharist was the inspiration of virgins who chose to live as brides of Christ, and the mainstay of men who bound themselves by vows of holy celibacy. The high resolves of many a hero of Christian history derived their impulse and received their benediction from the tabernacle. Paul and Barnabas set out from the foot of the altar to undertake their missionary labors (Acts, 13:2) and so likewise numberless missionary apostles in later years. In periods of religious and moral decline the Eucharist was the center from which reforms were inaugurated and successfully prosecuted.

Thus in many ways it is true to say that we live *by* the Eucharist. Without the Eucharist there cannot be any Christian life, much less any Christian perfection.

We live *in* the Eucharist. In the early Christian centuries especially, the individual life of Christians, and still more their corporate life in the Church, was encompassed by the eucharistic liturgy, and the same

is true to a considerable extent to the present day. The Eucharist is the center and crown of all our sacramental system and of all our religious ceremonies. In ancient times Baptism and Confirmation were actually parts of the Mass liturgy of Holy Saturday. Penance has always been regarded as a preparation for the Eucharist, as Holy Communion is the seal of divine forgiveness. Extreme Unction as the sacrament of the sick and dying is always associated with the last Viaticum. Holy Orders are conferred in a graduated ceremony which is enclosed within the action of the Mass, for they are all intrinsically planned with the Mass as their goal and crown. Matrimony is celebrated before the altar with a nuptial Mass and the giving of Holy Communion to the bride and bridegroom.

A cursory glance over the whole field of the Church's public religious exercises will show how entirely they center about the Mass and the Real Presence. What a plain sense we have of something lacking whenever circumstances oblige us to do without the Mass or without Benediction at the end of a service. "Where there are two or three gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt., 18:20). These words of our Lord were meant

primarily of His presence by grace and power, but the popular Christian mind is inclined to understand them as meaning His eucharistic presence.

No one but God Himself can know the number of those who draw near to the eucharistic Lord in daily or nightly prayer, either actually visiting Him before the altar or communing with Him in mind and heart and love and desire.

We live *for* the Eucharist. This phrase may be understood as the expression of a particular devotional tendency. The great christological controversies of the third and fourth centuries gave a distinctive tone to the devotion of that age by emphasizing the sovereignty of Christ, the Lord and King of mankind. In a similar way the thirteenth century emphasized devotion to the eucharistic Christ and originated practices of eucharistic devotion apart from the regular liturgy.

This eucharistic devotion became widespread and has taken such deep hold that our popular devotion today is almost exclusively eucharistic. Worship of God the Father has to a large extent become worship of the eucharistic God-man. This is undoubtedly a somewhat narrow and one-sided devotional attitude, not recommended but rather discouraged by the

Church, although a certain sort of plea may be made for it. For in the Eucharist God does actually dwell among us; and surely it is proper to adore His invisible divinity under the visible appearances which He has chosen, to bring our petitions and thanksgivings to His presence in the tabernacle. We say in the words of the Apostle Philip: "Lord, show us the Father and it is enough for us;" and our Lord's answer is still the same: "So long a time have I been with you and you have not known Me; he that seeth Me seeth the Father also. How sayest thou: Show us the Father; do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in Me?" (John, 14:8). And again He says: "He that loveth Me shall be loved by My Father" (John, 14:21). Worship of our Lord in the Eucharist is worship of God and, therefore, also of the Father.

These thoughts have brought us, perhaps unconsciously, to another and a somewhat neglected aspect of our devotional life. In the Eucharist God gives and we receive. But all life must give as well as receive. Life does not consist only of birth and growth and assimilation; it is fruitful, it gives, it imparts. Originating by God's own bestowal of something of Himself, life has by its very essence the capacity and tendency and urge to give. We receive God's grace

not only in order to have it but also to impart it in thankful service of our gracious benefactor.

The full extent of God's goodness appears herein that He gave us the Eucharist not only to be the food of our soul but to be also our sacrificial gift to Him. "For this sacrament is not only a treasure store of heavenly riches which when rightly used will secure us in His grace and love; it also contains a very special something which enables us to return Him a worthy thank-offering for all His gifts."[5]

One cannot go on accepting and not feel obliged to give. One cannot continually receive gifts and give nothing in return. Well, the inmost meaning of religious sacrifice is that of a gift which we offer to God in gratitude and adoration.

Our gift to God! Ah, how insignificant and worthless it must be. If we had any gifts to offer that might in any way compare with His, then we might reciprocate; but all we have has come from Him—except our sins.

How thrilling then to know that we are able to satisfy that productive urge of our very nature by means of a gift which surpasses all created values and is entirely worthy of God! "If the sacrifices of the Old

[5] *The Roman Catechism,* Part II, ch. 4, Q. 67.

Covenant were pleasing and acceptable, of which it was once said: 'Sacrifices and oblations Thou wilt not and holocausts do not please Thee', what may we not expect of that oblation in which we offer to God Him of Whom a voice from heaven twice said: 'This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased?' "[6]

Thus the whole rich potency of life is realized in the eucharistic sacrifice. It is both starting-point and goal. For from the sacrifice comes the sacrament with all its blessings, the sacrificial banquet, the food of the soul, the abiding presence in the tabernacle.

We speak of "the sacrament of the altar" and we have almost forgotten why we use that name. We say that we approach "the table of the Lord," with hardly a thought that that table is the altar. Altar and communion rail have become two separate things in our present mind, whereas they are and must be one. And there are those in whose minds the word "altar" has merely an historical significance. These are mistakes that must be rectified.

The "sacrament of the altar" (the term as we commonly use it, comes from St. Augustine) is the sacrament which God gives us upon the sacrificial altar and in the sacrificial drama of the holy Mass. It is a sacrament which is at the same time an oblation, a sacra-

[6] Ibid.

ment given to us not only that we may receive it but quite as much that we may dispense it—toward God in due thanksgiving and bounden worship, toward our fellowmen in beneficent and hallowing love.

And the "table of the Lord" is that same altar of sacrifice where we first offer our gift of self-oblation and then sit at table with the Lord our God to receive His gift, His own well-beloved Son in the sacrificial banquet of Holy Communion.

It is much to be regretted that we have lost sight to a considerable extent of this idea of an exchange of gifts, of a mutual giving and receiving. We must correct this fault, for the fullness of our eucharistic life will not appear until this idea once more rules our soul, until we understand that our life is not full life unless it imparts on every side the vitality which it draws from the fountains of the Saviour. Perfect life is the interchange of giving and receiving.

The Eucharist must actually be with us what it is with Christ. His eucharistic life is full of energy. It reaches its supreme achievement in His eternal Sacrifice, His self-oblation to His heavenly Father. Must not our eucharistic life likewise attain its height in its oblation, seeing that all things are given to us in Him?

As Christ instituted the Eucharist ultimately "for the praise of the glory" of His Father and offers and gives Himself in the Eucharist for that ultimate end, so, too, let it be our endeavor to promote the divine plan of human salvation precisely by the Eucharist, to "re-establish all things in Christ" (Eph., 1:10), all our faith and hope and love, our prayer and our work, our taking and our giving, our purposes and our potencies, so that thus in our individual and our corporate Christian life we may promote the glory of the Father through our divine Lord and eucharistic Saviour.

And thus in our eucharistic life as in the eucharistic life of Christ, the whole cycle of the finite universe is made to begin and end with God. For so our Lord purposed in giving us the Eucharist as our sacrifice; that the sum of all that has come forth from God may go back to Him "through Christ our Lord" in this sacrifice which has for its oblation Christ Himself in His own Person and the mystic Christ, the body of the faithful made one by His love and grace.

"I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly." Mankind once turned away from God and forfeited the supernatural life. God restores it to us in the graces of redemption and in the Eucharist He pours it forth abundantly so that eucharistic life in us may be a fountain of living water

springing up to its primal source in Him. And it rises not as our life alone but in holy union with the life of the God-man, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The eucharistic Christ is our way and our truth and our life. "I am the way and the truth and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me" (John, 14:6).

## Chapter II

# THE VISIBLE CEREMONY OF THE CHRISTIAN SACRIFICE

*A papal Mass in the eighth century.*

One will hardly find anywhere a more impressive picture of the corporate prayer and sacrificial service of the Church than that which is given us in the plain and unpretentious description of the Mass in the old *ordines* or ceremonial books of the Church in Rome. Let us follow the *Ordo Romanus I,* which dates from pre-Carolingian times and in its chief features represents the days of Pope Gregory I.[1]

As we read we see a vivid enactment of the words of the early martyr-bishop, Ignatius of Antioch: "One Christ, one altar, one sacrifice, one bishop." We see a dramatic rendering of a kindred idea of the same St. Ignatius: that the bishop takes the place of Christ

[1] Pope Gregory the Great died in the year 604. *Ordo Romanus I* for the most part represents his time; but some features of it are of later date. Compare H. Grisar, in *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie,* IX 1885, pp. 389; and Stephan Beissel, in *Stimmen aus Maria Laach,* XLV, 1893, pp. 456; and the recent scholarly work of Carlo Silva-Tarouca, *Giovanni, Archicantor di S. Pietro a Roma e l'Ordo Romanus da lui compossto* (*anno* 680) in *Atti della Pontificia Academia Romana di Archeologia,* Serie III, Memorie, Vol. I, Parti I, pp. 159, Roma, 1923.

and so deserves the reverence and honor that we would give to Christ Himself if He were to appear again in person among us and to offer the eucharistic Sacrifice among us and with us.[2]

It is Easter Sunday, and the holy Sacrifice of the Mass is to be celebrated in the basilica of St. Mary Major.

The faithful in great numbers have gathered from all quarters of the city and from the suburbs and have assembled in this spacious church, the men on one side and the women on the other. Many pilgrims and

[2] This thought must be kept in mind throughout the following outline of the Mass ceremony with its various acts of homage to the Pope. No one will take offense except those in whom a false "democracy" has left no sense of respect for lawful authority or social rank. Popes and bishops know that ceremonial acts of homage are paid to them in their official capacity as representing Christ. If it be said that Christ in His life-time on earth was very simple in His manner, we reply that there is question here not of what He demanded for Himself but of what we in gratitude of heart are disposed to give to our divine Lord and Saviour. Moreover Christ Himself on certain occasions, such as His transfiguration on Mt. Tabor and His entry into Jerusalem before His passion, not only permitted and provided for the extraordinary manifestations of homage that were shown Him by the Apostles and the people, but also justified these against the complaints of the Pharisees. The Holy Year recently closed, with its many canonization ceremonies, has furnished occasions for extraordinary display of homage to the Pope, all witnesses agreeing to the general and edifying effect. And that no doubt because the Pope to whom these marks of homage were rendered, as to the Vicar of Christ, hands them on to the eucharistic Christ in whom they are laid at the feet of the heavenly Father. Thus they are rendered not merely in symbol but actually to the King of kings and belong to the visible worship of God.

strangers are present on this great feast day and at the solemn service. In the apse, the place of the clergy, are assembled the seven suburban bishops and other bishops who happen to be in the city, and the twenty-five pastors of the parish churches of the city, all grouped about the throne or "cathedra" of the Pope in such way that the bishops will be on his right and the priests on his left.

At an early hour the clergy of that particular region of the city which has its turn to minister at the service have come together at the Lateran, acolytes, sub-deacons and deacons; they are joined by others of the clergy, exclusive of the bishops and priests.

Accompanied by this body of the clergy and by his own court, the Pope sets out from the Lateran on the way to St. Mary Major. First walk the acolytes, and after them a group of the clergy and a series of officials; then come, mounted, the seven regional deacons and the seven regional sub-deacons; immediately before the Pope walks one acolyte who carries the holy chrism.[3] Then comes the Pope himself, mounted and having to his right and left a personal servant on either side. Behind the Pope come the great officials

[3] To be used in the confirmation of those who had been baptised in the stational church on the preceding Holy Saturday.

of his court, and then a group of servants carrying the sacred vestments and vessels which belong to the papal treasury and which are to be used in the service.

Arrived at St. Mary Major, the Pope dismounts and is received by the parish priest and his assistants and conducted to the secretarium, an ante-room near the portal of the basilica, where he is seated. Here he is robed ceremonially in the liturgical vestments, which resemble in general form those of the present day. Meanwhile in an adjoining room the deacons put on their special vestments. The deacon who is to chant the Gospel receives the Gospel book from an acolyte, finds and marks the passage for the day, gives the book back to the acolyte and directs him to go with a sub-deacon and carry it to the altar.

All is ready for the service. The regional sub-deacon on duty goes into the basilica and gives notice to the choir to be ready. After inquiry of the choir he returns to the secretarium and kneels before the Pope and announces to him who will read the Epistle and who will chant the Gradual. He then rises and awaits the signal of the Pope. At this signal he turns and directs that the processional candles be lighted and he

himself prepares the censer which is carried before the Pope.[4]

The choir is in its place before the altar and the leader now intones the antiphon for the Introit. When the deacons hear the antiphon they go and stand beside the Pope. He now rises, giving his right hand to the arch-deacon and his left to the deacon next in rank, and walking between them he moves toward the door. The procession is now in motion and passes into the basilica and up the center of the nave toward the altar.

The basilica is a long and lofty hall, its central nave separated from the lower side aisles by rows of stately columns. In its forward part there is a space railed off before the altar for the choir. At the forward end of the nave is the great triumphal arch with the altar directly beneath it. The altar is a simple and massive table without any tabernacle or reredos to obstruct the view beyond it of the apse and the papal throne. Above the altar is a canopy upheld by four columns of stone.

[4] The incensing of the oblation at the Offertory had not yet been introduced in the Roman liturgy. Incense was a mark of honor to the person before whom it was carried. And as the Book of the Gospels was a symbol of Christ Himself, incense was carried before it when the deacon went to the ambo to sing the Gospel (*Ordo Rom. I, II, III*). The incensing of the altar, the clergy and the laity is found in the ninth century

Arrived before the altar, the deacons take off their plantae or chasubles and give them to sub-deacons who hand them on to acolytes. Meanwhile two acolytes advance toward the Pope, carrying a coffer which contains the "sancta," or the eucharistic species consecrated in the preceding Mass, and to be joined with the oblation in the present Mass, thus signifying the union of one Mass with another and the continuity of the unending sacrifice. The sub-deacon presents the coffer to the Pope who bows his head in reverence and observes if the quantity is sufficient for the commixtion ceremony in the Mass about to be celebrated and pronounces accordingly.

The seven candle-bearers divide so that the Pope may pass between them. In like manner he passes amidst the choir and on toward the altar. He pauses to bow in reverence to the altar and to utter a brief prayer, makes the sign of the cross upon his forehead, greets the assembled bishops and priests and deacons with the kiss of peace, and gives a signal to the director of the choir to end the Introit psalm with the *"Gloria Patri."* At the *"Sicut erat,"* the deacons advance two by two and bow to the altar and then return to the side of the Pope. He, in the meantime, kneels in prayer at a bench before the altar. When the anti-

phon of the Introit is repeated he rises, kisses the book of the Gospels, and passes beyond the altar into the apse or sanctuary and to his "cathedra" or throne at the extreme end of the semi-circle of the apse. Here he stands, turned away from all the assembly.

The choir begins the Kyrie eleison and continues until a signal is given by the Pope. He then turns and faces the assembly and intones the Gloria in excelsis, again turning away while the chant continues. At the end of the Gloria he turns with the salutation: *"Pax vobis"*; then, facing away once more, he chants the *"Oremus"* and the Collect for the day. This finished, he turns and seats himself upon his throne and signs to all the bishops and priests to be seated.

The sub-deacon, whose duty it is to read the Epistle, mounts the ambo, a pulpit at the choir rail, and reads the Epistle passage of the day. When he has finished the appointed chanter from the steps of the ambo chants the Gradual as a kind of reply to the Epistle.

Then the deacon who is to read the Gospel goes and kneels before the Pope and kisses the papal slipper without any word. The Pope says to him: *"May the Lord be in your heart and on your lips."* The deacon rises, goes to the altar, kisses the book of the Gospels (which represents Christ Himself), and takes it in his hands. He moves toward the ambo, preceded by two

sub-deacons, one of them carrying a censer, and two acolytes who carry candles. He gives the book for a moment to the sub-deacon whose hands are free while he himself locates the passage to be read, and then mounts the ambo. He chants the Gospel of the day and at its end is greeted by the Pope with the words: *"Peace be to you."* He then descends and gives the book to the sub-deacon; it is carried to the Pope and those about him to be kissed in reverence and then given to the acolyte who has care of it and who replaces it in its case to be brought back in due time to the Lateran.

The introductory part of the service is finished. The Pope again salutes the whole assembly: *"Dominus vobiscum"*, and is answered: *"Et cum spiritu tuo."* Then he chants: *"Oremus,"* and the Offertory begins.

The deacon who has read the Gospel goes to the altar and receives from an acolyte the chalice and corporal. The corporal in those days was a large cloth which was spread over the entire altar table. The Pope rises and with his immediate assistants passes into the senatorium, a forward part of the nave where the senators, and later the nobility, had their place, and there he receives the offerings of the laity.

Each one presents a small flask of wine and a roll of bread. The Pope hands the wine offerings to the arch-deacon who empties the flasks into a chalice which is carried by one of the regional sub-deacons; the latter empties the chalice from time to time into a larger vessel which is carried by an acolyte. The bread offerings are handed by the Pope to one of the regional sub-deacons; the latter hands them on to another sub-deacon who gathers them all into a large cloth held by two acolytes.

In this way the Pope receives the offerings of the nobility, first on the side of the men and then on that of the women. When he turns to the women's side, one of the assisting bishops begins to take the offerings from the rest of the congregation on the men's side and then passes to the side of the women. When the number of those present is large the priests assist in receiving the oblations.

All this ended, the Pope and his assistants return into the presbyterium or apse where he and those who have taken part in receiving the oblations wash their hands. The arch-deacon goes to the altar and arranges the oblations upon the altar table. He receives from a sub-deacon the Pope's personal oblation of

wine and pours it into the chalice[5] and then does likewise with the wine oblations of the deacons and all the clergy. The sub-deacon receives from the director of the choir a vessel of water from which he pours a quantity of water into the chalice with the wine. During all this time the choir has kept up the chanting of the Offertory antiphon and psalm.

The Pope rises from his throne and goes to the altar bows in reverence to it, and personally receives the bread oblations of the deacons which he places on the altar. The arch-deacon receives from the sub-deacon the Pope's own personal oblation of two rolls of bread which he gives to the Pope to be placed with the others.

All have now made their offering. From the Pope himself to the last man in the assembly, everyone has contributed his part in the eucharistic sacrifice. These offerings united on the altar are a visible symbol of the united brotherhood of all the faithful here assembled before the Lord of heaven and earth.

Up to the present the description of the scene has not plainly focused upon a fixed point. From now on there is one center where all the action converges, and it is the altar.

[5] Only one large chalice was used at the Mass. If the number of communicants was more than proportionate to its capacity, wine was added during the distribution of Holy Communion.

The Pope stands at the altar—we would say behind the altar—looking across the altar table toward the choir and the people. At a glance from him the choir ends the Offertory psalm. At the same time the bishops, priests and deacons take their stand about, behind and to the sides of the Pope. The sub-deacons stand before the altar and in front of the choir, opposite to and facing the Pope.

The Pope prays the Secret prayers[6], ending aloud with the: *"Per omnia saecula saeculorum,"* to which the sub-deacons reply: *"Amen."* He and they now alternate in the dialogue which preceeds the Preface.

*"The Lord be with you." "And with thy spirit." "Lift up your hearts." "We have them lifted up unto the Lord." "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God." "It is meet and just."*

The Pope chants the Preface aloud and alone. The sub-deacons join with him in the Sanctus while all bow low in adoration. And thus the whole assembly stands bowed in reverence until the end of the Canon, a striking picture of homage and service. The Pope alone stands erect after the Sanctus and proceeds with the Canon.[7] As the *Ordo Romanus* beautifully says: "Surgit pontifex solus et intrat in Canonem." He is

[6] At this date the Secret was still the only Offertory prayer.

[7] See the author's article: *The silent praying of the Canon,* in *Theologie und Glaube.*

Christ's representative and he alone takes Christ's place, praying this solemn and majestic prayer in the midst of the bishops, priests, clerics and laity of every rank and station, who stand around him bowed in adoration. Heretofore there has been continual movement and reading and chant; now all is still and silence is laden with mystery.

All eyes are cast down before the majesty of God to Whom the Sacrifice of the New Covenant is offered. Hearts beat perceptibly in these sacred moments. One united prayer rises to the throne of the eternal Father on high. May He deign to receive the oblation of His dearly-beloved Son which here is made, not merely for them all but with them all, as their offering and His. No sound breaks the deep silence; only the whisper of the pontiff as he speaks those mystic and omnipotent words of consecration by which Jesus Christ, God and man, becomes present on the altar. Lower still the eyes, and higher the hearts, while the solemn silence seems to grow vibrant and audible as these divine deeds are done.

Now Christ has come; and human hearts breathe sweet relief, for the way to heaven is open. But the silence and repose continue unbroken. What room is there for words and ceremonies while this divine and enthralling action takes place. The hushed attention

of the whole assembly, their one united and wordless prayer, whispered by the mouth of their high-priest, speaks more loudly than any uttered words or chant or litany of supplication.[8]

At the *"Nobis quoque peccatoribus"* the sub-deacons stand erect[9] and at the *"Per omnia"* the arch-deacons likewise, to assist the Pope in the ceremony of the sign of the cross made with the sacred Bread above the chalice. Then in loud and solemn chant the Pope brings the Canon to its end with the words: *"Per omnia saecula saeculorum,"* to which is answered: *"Amen."*

The Pater noster with its added Libera begin the ceremony of the Breaking of Bread. Throughout the Canon an acoylte has stood at the right side of the altar holding a paten covered with a veil; it contains the "sancta," the Eucharist reserved from the preceding Mass and now to be joined with this one. The acolyte comes forward and gives the paten to a sub-deacon. It is given to the arch-deacon who gives it to a deacon to hold until the proper moment. At the words *"Pax Domini"* the arch-deacon makes the sign

[8] The elevation of the Host and of the Chalice had not yet been introduced; the Consecration proceeded in silence like the rest of the Canon and without visible ceremony.

[9] To be ready to chant their reply.

of the cross three times with his hand over the chalice and then, taking the paten, drops the "sancta" into the chalice. Then he turns and (suiting the action to the words: *"Pax Domini"*) gives the kiss of peace to the first of the bishops and from one to another to all the assembly.

The Pope breaks off a particle from one of the consecrated Breads, lays this particle upon the altar and the rest upon the paten which a deacon holds, and then turns and leaves the altar and takes his place at his throne.

The arch-deacon takes the chalice from the altar and gives it to a sub-deacon who stands holding it at the right of the altar. Other sub-deacons advance and with them acolytes who carry small bags of linen. They hold these open before the arch-deacon that he may place therein the consecrated Breads. When that is done the acolytes go to the right and left and present the linen bags with the consecrated Breads to the bishops and priests. The paten containing the Pope's own consecrated Breads is brought by two sub-deacons and given to two deacons who stand beside the Pope.

There now remains at the altar no more of the eucharistic species except that particle which the Pope broke and left there when he returned to his throne;

and this particle remains on the altar till the end "in order that the altar may not be left without the oblation" and is reserved for the following Mass.[10]

The higher clergy stand with the holy Eucharist in their hands and their eyes upon the Pope. And at a signal from him all break their Breads and the two deacons beside the Pope break his Breads. At the same time the arch-deacon has signalled to the choir to chant the Agnus Dei.

The master of the papal court and the papal notary go into the nave to carry to designated persons the Pope's invitation to dine with him after the Mass. This will appear strange to us unless we know that it is a relic of the "agape" or charity meal which in apostolic days was connected with the eucharistic sacrifice.

The Bread being broken, the deacon holds out the paten to the Pope and he first of all receives the Body of the Lord, standing at his throne and turned away from the assembly. He has first put a portion of the sacred Bread into the chalice, which has also been brought to him, with the words: *"May this mixture and consecration of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ avail us who receive it unto life everlast-*

[10] *Ordo I* does not say that was done with this portion of the Eucharist but we may presume that it was reserved for the following Mass and that it is identical with the afore-mentioned "sancta."

*ing"*; to which is answered: *"Amen."* And now to the arch-deacon he says: *"Peace be to you,"* and is answered: *"And to you."* Then the arch-deacon gives him to receive of the precious Blood.

The higher clergy in the order of their rank, bishops, priests and deacons, come before the Pope and receive from his hands the Body of the Lord.[11] They then proceed to the altar where the first of the bishops takes his stand with the chalice which the arch-deacon has given him, and he gives to each one to receive of the precious Blood.

The Pope himself descends into the senatorium in the forward part of the nave and in the same order which we saw at the Offertory he distributes the Body of the Lord to the nobility. The arch-deacon follows immediately behind him with the chalice and a tube of gold or silver by means of which each one may receive some drops of the precious Blood. Meanwhile from the moment the Pope leaves his throne, the choir chants the Communion antiphon and psalm, continuing until all have received. The bishops and priests, as many as may be necessary, assist in distributing to all the assembled faithful the Body of the Lord, followed by deacons who administer the precious Blood.

[11] At this date the custom was for all to receive Holy Communion standing, and the consecrated Bread was given into the hand of the recipient.

Returned to the throne, the Pope and arch-deacon administer the double Holy Communion to the sub-deacons and lower clergy. The members of the choir receive either before or after the Communion chant. When all have communicated the Pope gives a signal to end the Communion chant with the *"Gloria Patri"* and the antiphon.

There remains only the final prayer, the oratio ad complendum or Postcommunion. The Pope approaches the altar and, turned away from the people, chants: *"Dominus vobiscum"*, and is answered: *"Et cum spiritu tuo."* At the end of the prayer the arch-deacon signals one of the deacons to chant the dismissal: *"Ite missa est,"* to which the assembly replies: *"Deo gratias."*

The procession forms for the return, headed by the seven acolytes[12] with candles and the sub-deacon with the censer. The bishops and priests remain in the

[12] The recurrence of the number seven may be explained by the fact that the city of Rome was divided into seven districts, each of which had its representatives in all the grades of the clergy. But more probably the seven candle-bearers recall the seven lamps mentioned in the Apocalypse (1:13) amid which the Lord is enthroned, for the seven acolytes were all from the same district. The seven candles were later changed to six for reasons of symmetry and that is the number on our altars at present. The crucifix on our altars was originally the processional cross which, after the time of Charlemagne's Donation in the year 800, was carried before the Pope.

apse where at the beginning they had awaited the coming of the Pope. As he now passes they salute him and ask his blessing. *"May God bless us,"* he says, and they answer: *"Amen."* And on his way from the altar to the portal of the basilica, the clergy, the choir, and the people of all ranks beg his blessing which he imparts on every side, and so with the seven deacons about him makes his way to the secretarium where he lays aside the liturgical vestments for his return home to the Lateran.

Such is the solemn Mass in its bare external outlines as we read them in the old *"ordines."* Nothing has been said of the verbal content and the inner spirit of the prayers, nor of the internal structure and meaning of the Mass-drama. And yet this mere external picture conveys a powerful impression of well-knit dramatic unity. The whole drama centers about the Pope, the spiritual head of this united body. The single thought and desire of all is to be one with him in his action and prayer.

The sense of unity is felt strongly in the Offertory ceremony, the gifts given to the Pope by all, and again in the distribution of Holy Communion, given by the Pope to all. The gifts are directed all to one center and from that center comes to all the infinitely greater

Gift in return. Offertory and Communion appear even to the most casual observer as two related things, the second supposing and completing the first, as one united action in two parts which together make up the holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Again, how splendidly does this ceremony as here described show forth the unity of the Church. The Church here appears as an organization of law and discipline and a brotherhood of love. All are united in Christ, their Lord and Head, and visibly grouped in homage and service about His vicar on earth. Rank is observed in the genuine spirit of ancient Roman law and order. At the same time the Pope gives and receives quite like all the rest, no more and no less than the humblest of his flock. For all receive equally the same eucharistic Saviour as the food of the sacrificial banquet, and all offer the same simple gifts of bread and wine. There is no one who cannot give, no one who may not receive.

It is not possible simply to transplant the customs of the past into the present. But as history is always the best teacher of mankind, acquaintance with the history of the Eucharist will offer us today many a valuable suggestion for the fashioning of our eucharistic liturgy according to our ideals and needs. In dignity of rendition, in the successful expression of

reverence, in the close organic union of clergy and laity, in the intimate inter-relation of sacrifice-oblation and sacrifice-banquet, this picture from the past will furnish us with counsels and will suggest a goal which we also in accordance with present Church regulations may attain in splendid measure.

## Chapter III

# THE INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF THE MASS-DRAMA

*"Let us give thanks to the Lord our God."* (The Preface.)

The Christian religion is essentially a religion of love. To love means to esteem and revere; it means to acknowledge and to render thanks, to praise and glorify, to donate and dedicate, to believe and confide, without any fear or anxiety, with no false or ulterior purposes, with joy and alacrity, with inward peace and holy desire, ready to give though having only one's poor self to give, rich beyond measure in the possession of Him Whom we love.

What one of us can truly say that such is his case with the Lord our God? Is not our chief thought the selfish one: to have, and to have more? When we give it is with the hope they we may get more in return. When we pray our prayer is mostly petition. If our prayer is not answered we complain. We do occasionally deny ourselves; we "make sacrifices" as the phrase is; but is love our motive? How often it is

fear that holds a whip above us; how often it is hope of reward that moves us, while we ignore and neglect the love impulses of our soul. We are a long way from the true spirit of Christian love.

"Send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created; and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth" (Ps. 103:30).

Day by day in the holy Mass the greatest miracle of God's love is wrought before our eyes—and we do not understand it. Do not say that we are creatures of the dust and that God's works are too high for us; for in this work God has stooped to our lowness. The truth is that the Mass represents a supernatural world and a supernatural concept of life and we have let it become strange and unfamiliar to us. We have lost the pass word that gives entry to the holy land.

The Mass is essentially a gift that we human beings offer to the Lord God, our heavenly Father. But how speak of a gift that we may make to God? We have nothing to give and He is the Lord and Owner of everything; we are nothing, He is all. And yet it is true that the Mass is a gift. We must give a gift to God, the gift of all that we are and all that we have, however much or little that may be.

Must every gift make one party poorer and the other richer? Must every gift be a transfer of property and a deed of title? Are there not gifts of homage and love? A little child in a humble home who finds some simple gift to give to parents on a feast day has no thought of adding to their worldly wealth, but only wishes to express a child's reverence and love. Love always loves to give, though it have nothing to give but itself. And it is precisely ourself that we must dedicate to God.

Do not be afraid that you will have nothing left, that you are giving your all away. For in the Mass we are made one with Christ and in Him all things are ours, our self and our Lord and the heavenly Father and all of His creation. It is true that you will no longer belong entirely to yourself. But is it loss to lose a selfish self, a self that troubles and worries one and holds one down to earth? Is it loss to find oneself again in Christ, the sum of all truth and the source of all bounty?

But there is one condition demanded of us. We must learn to have at least the sincere desire to be utterly unselfish with God. Remember the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. And do not say with self-complacency: "I am pleased to make this offering to the Lord." But say: "O my Lord and

Father, I wish to be Thine; deign to accept me in Thy mercy." And thus in the spirit of humility we shall begin to understand the mystery of the Mass.

And in giving yourself up to participation in the offering of the Mass, do not be too anxious lest you seem to abbreviate your preparation for Holy Communion. It is a wrong sort of piety, it is religious self-deceit, to make of the Mass, which is our sublimest act of divine worship, a work of anxious self-concern. God wants of us in the Mass the sublime expression of the deepest and truest self-oblation and thanksgiving. And we are all absorbed in the thought of how we shall get our share of merit and grace. Give glory to God; and He will take care of your soul.

The Mass, then, is a gift to God, an act of oblation. Let us put aside the phrase we use so often: "To make a sacrifice;" and let us offer an oblation, let us give a gift to God.

We know what gift-giving means among men; but what does it mean between man and God? The Council of Trent in its discussions on the theology of the Mass, adopted the following formula: Sacrifice in the strict sense is a visible gift hallowed by the mystical action of the priest and offered to God. And applying

this to the Mass, it was said: The Mass is a true and actual sacrifice; for in the Mass the gifts of bread and wine are changed into the Eucharist by the holy blessing of the priest, that is, by the words of consecration, and are thus offered to God.

Hence the essence of the Mass as a sacrifice is in the Consecration. For at the Consecration occurs, first, the "holy blessing" or the consecration of the Offertory gifts, and second, the oblation to God of these consecrated gifts. This oblation is made in the name of Christ, that is, at His bidding and by the priest as representing Him. It is at the moment of Consecration that the priest most especially takes the place of Christ, when he speaks Christ's very words. In fact, the Mass as a sacrificial oblation to God would be essentially complete with simply the Consecration.

In the religions of all civilized peoples, whether Christian or not, sacrifice, besides being an oblation of visible gifts, is also a symbolic action. For the visible gifts are symbols of the person who offers them. The outward, visible act of oblation is a symbol of the interior act of self-oblation. And while the visible action is important, and an essential part of the sacrifice, the chief importance lies in the interior act of self-oblation. A sacrifice without this symbolic mean-

ing, that is, a mere external sacrifice, still has value as an act of homage, but naturally an inferior kind of value.

This symbolic value is plainly apparent in the Christian Sacrifice of the Mass. The whole internal structure of the Mass-drama is governed by the idea of self-oblation which it carries through the three stages of preparation, development and sublimation. The climax is reached in the prayer *Supplices Te rogamus,* after the Consecration, and is sustained throughout the remainder of the Consecration portion of the Mass to the *Amen* before the Pater noster. Then follows, beginning with the Pater noster, the Communion portion or the sacrificial banquet.

The Mass as a sacrifice-oblation begins with the Offertory. All that precedes is an introductory prayer service with a two-fold purpose: first, to render homage and honor to God, and second, to purify and sanctify the worshippers and to prepare them for the main action of the Mass. Hence this introductory part is a preliminary preparation of the interior disposition of self-oblation in the souls of the faithful. From the Offertory on there proceeds a double and parallel action: first, the oblation of the visible gifts, and second, the oblation of self. As we now go on to

follow the liturgical text and the plan of the Mass, it is important to keep both of these in mind.[1]

One can hardly imagine a more pregnant statement of the essentials of the Christian religion that that which is given us in the Mass. The Christian religion is founded upon Christ's Sacrifice upon the Cross of Calvary, that oblation, both inward and outward, in which He, the God-man, offered Himself, His human nature, to His heavenly Father for His Father's honor and glory and for the redemption and salvation of mankind. In the Mass the sacrifice of Calvary is renewed[2] in a wonderful way by the oblation of the self-same Gift by the hands of the priest who acts in the name of Christ and of the Church.

There is only one, there can be only one sacrificial gift intrinsically worthy of God and acceptable before God, and that one is the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ joined with His divinity. And now, behold what wonder is actually wrought in the Mass.

[1] In spite of the objections of Dom Casel (*Theol. Rev.* 1924, p. 323) I still maintain that there is an ascending movement in the liturgical structure of the Mass. He himself admits the two chief points occurring in the prayers *Quam oblationem* and *Supplices;* and from these the rest follows. We are concerned with the Roman liturgy as we have it today and it does show the structure as described. I do not mean, of course, that each and every prayer, especially in the Offertory portion, must be located just as it is now; but we take the structure as we find it.

[2] *The Roman Catechism,* Part II, Ch. 4, Qq. 54 and 60 (instauratio).

On the one hand, our earthy gifts of bread and wine are sanctified and transubstantiated by the consecration or the "holy blessing" and become the self-same oblation as that of Calvary, the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ; and these are offered anew in the Mass, not in the same bloody manner as on Calvary, but as the food-oblation foretold by the prophet Malachy. And thus the innate desire of humanity to express its homage to God in visible gifts is realized in this most holy way through Christ our Lord.

On the other hand, we ourselves, the persons who offer these visible gifts, and with them dedicate ourselves to God, are ourselves exalted and gathered up into that mysterious union with Christ in grace which St. Paul describes as the mystical body of Christ. We are made one with Christ and so do actually become, ourselves, an acceptable oblation to the Father.

Thus is the work of redemption made permanent. Thus does Christ restore the relationship between God as our Lord and Father and us as His loyal subjects and loving children. Thus does He reestablish the realm of grace into which we are baptized as children, in which we are confirmed as citizens and housemates, in which we grow to Christian maturity, until at last we shall meet Him in His divine splendor in the realm of glory, ourselves glorified and blest in Him.

The realm of grace is something supernatural and invisible, seen only by God in the depths of our souls. Yet we in our human nature possess intellect and free will. And our constant aim must be to supernaturalize the natural, to steep our intellect in those supernatural truths which Christ has revealed to us, to conform our free-will to the supreme will of God and to make His will prevail throughout our whole being and all our life, and thus to make the invisible life of grace pervade our conscious life. In this way only can the kingdom of God among men realize its whole potency and purpose.

Moreover, our human nature is essentially social. We are moved by a natural impulse to visibly associate and cooperate in the carrying out of a project. Christ had this social character of mankind in view when He founded His Church, a visible society, partly divine and partly human, an organization made up of all those who are redeemed and united with Him in faith and grace. Those who live in Christ, live the Christian life in common, as they will enjoy in common the realm of eternal glory.

It would be a mistake to regard the Church or her ministers as in the strict sense a mediating agency between God and men. For "there is one Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (I Tim. 2:5).

The priest in Christ's Church is not a priest in the same sense as was the priest in the pagan religions of old. For with us not the priest but Christ is the Mediator. And all the faithful are united with Christ and share in His priesthood. The priests of the Church are distinguished from the rest of the faithful in that they are drawn more closely than the rest into the priesthood of Christ and are empowered to do certain outward acts with the performance of which Christ has connected the giving of inward graces. And one of these outward acts which is most important for the corporate life of Christian society is the celebration of that holy Sacrifice which binds all in the mystical body of Christ.

All these fundamental truths of the Christian religion are brought out and given expression in the liturgy of the Mass.

The introductory prayer-service which precedes the Mass proper, is sometimes called the "Mass of the Catechumens," because in early days the catechumens, or those not yet baptized, were allowed to assist at it. Some parts of it are invariable and other parts change from day to day through the round of the year. Throughout the invariable portion, and therefore in every Mass, runs the dominant note of homage to the royal Lord. The varying parts present throughout the

course of the year, in a sort of vivid and impressive pageantry, a two-fold and parallel theme; first, the foundation and formation of the kingdom of God on earth in the lifetime of Jesus, and second, the formation throughout all the succeeding centuries of the kingdom of His grace in human souls and the development of that kingdom in the conscious life of the faithful.

In this way the Christian soul is made to live from day to day under the vital influence of those past events which continue evermore to form and fashion the life of the soul, bringing it ever to resemble more closely the model of which St. Paul speaks (Gal. 4:19), the model life of Christ, bidding it look forward in holy expectation to that day when the unseen will be revealed and when faith will give place to sight.[3]

We begin with sorrowful confession of our faults; we spurn the promptings of self-love and the ways of sin; we arise and lift our voices in the Gloria to sing the praises of the Most High. *"Thou alone art holy, Thou alone art the Lord, Thou alone, O Jesus Christ, art most high together with the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father."*

[3] See Kramp, *Messliturgie und Gottesreich,* in the series *Ecclesia Orans,* Vols, 6, 7, 8, 3-5 ed., Freiburg, Herder, 1922-23.

By prayers and readings the soul is enlivened and elevated to the high plane of those heroic deeds of salvation which are soon to be mystically renewed upon the altar, and gives utterance to this quickened life in the language of the ancient Psalms. And thus as from a fair and fertile spiritual soil our self-oblation will rise as a sweet-smelling flower, a perfume pleasing to the Lord.

The Mass proper begins with the Offertory. The priest, and with him all the assembly, offers bread and wine as a food-oblation to the honor and glory of God. They are simple gifts, yet deeply significant both intrinsically and symbolically. The Mass is a food-oblation and hence we offer food materials. Man needs food to sustain his life. Bread and wine stand for food and drink, for a kind of nourishment that is wholesome and satisfying and common throughout the earth. Hence we offer bread and wine as representing our life. These food-stuffs have an intrinsic value, and a high one, in their power to sustain life. And that value makes them appropriate symbols of our human life which they sustain, and therefore of our own persons. It is chiefly on account of this symbolic value that we offer the bread and wine to God. For the intrinsic value of the material gift means little in the sight of God Who has no real need of anything.

We offer bread and wine at the bidding of our Lord. His own use of these as symbols shows us another reason for the choice of them. He once said: "I am the Bread of Life" *(*John, 6:35*)*, and again: "I am the Vine" (John, 15:5). And this bread and wine upon the altar are to be changed into the very Body and Blood of Christ. Therefore we bring these gifts and pray that God may bless them: *"Come, O Thou Who makest holy, almighty and eternal God, and bless this sacrifice prepared for Thy holy name."*

Our gifts of bread and wine are symbolic; they represent the personality of those who offer them. This bread and wine are to be consecrated and transsubstantiated into the real Body of Christ. And we also, ourselves, are in a certain way to be consecrated and gathered up into the mystical Body of Christ. These visible and earthly gifts, before their consecration, represent our human nature with its frailty and faultfulness, its misery within and without, its pitiful downward tendency, so well known to all who strive for high ideals. Earth-bound creatures that we are, we give ourselves to God and dedicate ourselves to Him over and over by varied phrases so that by repeated acts of self-oblation our soul may rise toward Him in His regions of perpetual light. It is this desire that brings to our lips the prayer which accompanies

the preparation of the chalice: *"O God, Who in a marvelous manner didst create and ennoble human nature, and still more marvelously hast renewed it; grant that by the mystical union of this water and wine we may be made partakers of His divinity Who vouchsafed to become partaker of our humanity, Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord."*

Throughout all the prayers from the Offertory to the Preface run the two main ideas—the offering of oblation and the petition for blessing, both in reference to the gifts of bread and wine and to the gift of our own person. Not all of these prayers are of equal date. Originally there were only those called the Secrets, the other prayers with their ceremonies being added at later dates. The petition for blessing upon the gifts is repeated again and again by many turns of phrase in order to express the urgent need and deep desire for this divine blessing, the desire to be ourselves consecrated and ennobled, and in order to rouse in every soul the earnest will to strive for and to attain this divine blessing which will make us worthy and acceptable in the sight of God.

The Offertory thus emphasizes the idea that we are to be united with Christ. And if so, then we are expected to be in the state of grace. The supposition of the liturgy, which is that of the Church and of

Christ, is that all who assist at Mass are in the state of grace. This is demanded not by the explicit positive law of the Church, but by the idea and purpose of the Mass. The Council of Trent[4] expressed the wish that all who assist at Mass receive Holy Communion, which supposes them in the state of grace. The liturgical prayers which follow the Communion also imply that all the faithful present have received the body of the Lord. And the Roman Ritual[5] gives us to understand that these prayers are still intended by the Church in that same sense and are not to be regarded merely as records of ancient custom.

The Preface introduces the Canon of the Mass, the solemn eucharistic prayer which is the core of the whole sacrifice. Why is this prayer in eucharistic or thanksgiving form? Because the Sacrifice we offer is not an entirely new one, independent of that of Calvary. It is the renewal of that very Sacrifice of the Cross which wrought the redemption of mankind and which rendered supreme homage to God. Hence we thank God; we offer our oblation in words of thanksgiving and as a eucharistic sacrifice. In its content our sacrifice is one of infinite homage and praise and thanksgiving and reparation, for it is the same sacri-

[4] Sess. 22, Can. 6; Denz. 944.
[5] Ed. 1925, Tit. IV, Ch. 2, N. 11.

fice as that of Calvary. But in its liturgical form it is essentially eucharistic, it is a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

The Preface introduces the idea of thanksgiving by a statement of reasons for thanksgiving, which reasons are made to vary somewhat according to the seasons and feasts of the year. The actual expression of thanks comes in the prayers of the Canon which follow, and especially in the central words and acts of oblation or sacrifice. We have heard the chanted words of the Preface over and over again but they never fail to move us by their deep solemnity.

*"The Lord be with you."*
*"And with thy spirit."*
*"Lift up your hearts."*
*"We have them lifted up unto the Lord."*
*"Let us give thanks to the Lord our God."*
*"It is meet and just."*
*"It is truly meet and just, right and availing unto salvation, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to Thee, O holy Lord, Father almighty, everlasting God, through Christ our Lord."*

Yes, through Christ our Lord, Who has redeemed us and restored us to supernatural life, Who has raised us up from our lowliness, from the slavery of sin, Who has made us once more children of God,

Who is our one and all, yesterday, today and forever, and through Whom alone we are worthy to render this thanksgiving. This thought sweeps the soul forward at once into a new hymn in praise of the glory of the Lord God and of His anointed One.

*"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of hosts.*
*Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.*
*Hosanna in the highest.*
*Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord.*
*Hosanna in the highest."*

He who comes in the name of the Lord; Him we await. For as we stand this moment before the Lord God with our earthly gifts and our earthly self, we know that we are not worthy to be received and borne aloft. Christ is our mediator. He comes in the name of the Lord His Father and He will go back to Him in our name, bearing our gifts and ourselves. Let us prepare for His coming.

The liturgical text constantly uses the plural number, for the liturgy is the prayer of the whole Christian family, the mystical body of Christ. Here in its supreme moments we are aware that we offer our sacrifice in Christian community as the servants and the family of God. And the family of God is not limited to those who are visibly present about the

altar, though they, indeed, are nearest to the sacrifice. It includes the whole Church on earth, and also in a very true sense the saints in heaven and the souls in purgatory. For while they do not actually take part in the offering of the Mass, they have their share in it in their own way and are united with us in its sentiments and share in its fruits.

We who are visibly gathered about the altar are conscious of this brotherhood of countless number. Hence in the prayer *Te igitur* we embrace them all in a far-reaching memento. We offer the Mass in union with the whole Church throughout the world. All the members of the Church are members of Christ. We are to be united with Him in the Mass and we must not approach Him singly for He comes to one and all; He comes as the king of His people, as the head of His mystical body. And we offer the Mass in communion with the saints in heaven, trusting that by union with their sanctity we may be more acceptable in the sight of God. He will not refuse the offering of His united family, of those who live in Christ, His well-beloved Son, of those redeemed by Christ's great Sacrifice of Calvary.

We are ready now to present our gift. *"We therefore beseech Thee, O Lord, mercifully to accept this oblation of our servitude as also of Thy whole family."*

We have assembled the whole multitude of God's children on earth and in heaven and have approached the eternal throne-room. But the doors are not yet open for we still lack the chief thing of all, the presence and leadership of Christ, our mediator and the highpriest of our Sacrifice. And hence we pray: *"Which oblation do Thou, O God, vouchsafe in all things to bless, approve, ratify and make worthy and acceptable; that it may become for us the Body and Blood of Thy most-beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ."*[6] And straightway comes the wonderful answer. Christ comes and opens the portal and brings us to His Father.

The solemn moment has arrived in which He keeps the pledge of the Last Supper. He comes, and in the person of the duly authorized priest, in this renewal of the Last Supper, He changes the gifts of bread and wine into His own person, the self-same oblation of His great Sacrifice of Calvary, the one and only and perpetual Sacrifice of man's redemption.

Mark well the full meaning of the Consecration—our offering is merged with that of Christ! Our visible

[6] Regarding the much discussed translation of this particular prayer, see Kramp, *Zum Gebet "Quam oblationem,"* in *Korresp. und Offertenbl.*, Regensburg, 1925, 35, 69; also C. A. Kneller, *"Rationabilem" im Messkanon*, in *Zeitsch. f. kath. Theol.* 1925, 474. The word *rationabile* is undoubtedly synonymous with the other words.

gift is changed into the eucharistic Body of Christ and we ourselves are gathered up in a peculiar way into the mystical Body of Christ, both inwardly and outwardly our offering is made one with His.

In the Consecration we reach the climax of our drama of sacrifice. We are made one with Christ. In Him we may enter the gates of the heavenly city; in Him we may offer to the Father our gift which is now the gift of Christ; in Him we may offer ourselves wholly confident that we shall be accepted. This thought is sustained throughout the following prayer in its three parts: *Unde et memores, Supra quae, Supplices Te rogamus,* in which we offer to God in joy and gratitude "the holy Bread of eternal life and the Chalice of everlasting salvation," and beg Him to receive this Gift and us ourselves.

The words refer directly to the sacred Gift upon the altar, but the Church has always understood them also in a symbolic sense, as correct theology must. The Body of the Lord hidden under the appearances of bread and wine is also a symbol of His Mystical Body of which we are the members. With Christ and in Christ we ascend from this altar on earth to the altar on high in the sight of the divine majesty of the Father.

Thus the first purpose of our sacrificial drama is attained. We have offered ourselves to God in this holy Symbol and He has received us and made us one with Himself. Thus is the Sacrifice of Calvary renewed upon our altars. On the cross Christ offered Himself as mediator between fallen man and the eternal Father. By His triumphant death and resurrection He created His Church, He won His Bride. Upon our altars the same Christ, represented by His duly authorized priest, again offers Himself to His Father, but now in union with the Church, His Bride who day by day is robed in richer and more precious vesture; more precious as souls advance in Christian perfection and richer as their number grows; and all blest beyond measure in this union with God through the renewal of the Sacrifice of Christ.

Union with God by grace and love has its final goal in the union of everlasting glory which awaits both the individual soul and the entire Christian community. This is the thought contained in the two prayers that follow. We commemorate the souls of the faithful departed who are secure in the union of grace but who have not yet attained to the final union of glory, and for them we beg in virtue of this holy Sacrifice: *"a place of refreshment, light and peace."* And for them as for ourselves we pray, *"some part and fellowship*

*with all the saints"* in the realm of everlasting glory. And in this way the tide of our Sacrifice reaches the shores of eternity.

*"Through Christ our Lord."* This is the regular ending of the prayers which the Church prays officially as the Bride of Christ. It recurs again and again throughout the Mass. And we know the reason now, for the Consecration has taught us that only by Christ's love can we attain our goal. To emphasize this truth once more before the end, the Church makes us exclaim in the peroration of the Canon: *"Through Christ our Lord, through whom, O Lord, Thou dost always create, sanctify, quicken, bless and give us these things."*

Through Christ the eternal Father gave being to our earthly gifts in the first creation. Through Christ He sanctified and quickened and blest them so that they were changed into His Body and Blood. Through Christ He gave them to us that we might offer them as our worthy and acceptable oblation. Therefore: *"By Him, and with Him, and in Him, is to Thee, God the Father almighty, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen."*

Thus ends the oblation act of this divine drama. How wonderful are the sheer ascending lines of this beautiful composition, how profound the thought and

sentiment, how harmonious the blending, how exquisite the perfection of form. But we do not merely look upon it with admiration. We live the Mass. And as we continue to live it day by day, may we more and more draw spirit from the Spirit of Christ and grow in union with Him, in the union of invisible grace, and in the union of our conscious life with His.

The sacrificial banquet is an integral part of the sacrifice of the Mass. That is how our Lord intended Holy Communion and that is the wish of the Church. The Roman Ritual directs that the Communion of the people should take place in the Mass after the Communion of the priest; and that for a sufficient reason it may occasionally take place immediately before or after Mass when the Mass is a private one. The objective reason for this direction should be plain from what we have said about the Mass. The distribution and reception of Communion before or after the "parish" Mass is entirely outside the liturgical order. And Communion immediately after the Consecration, besides being contrary to regulations, disturbs the liturgical sequence at a point just preceding its very climax. In both cases Holy Communion is separated from the Sacrifice of the Mass—which it should not be and which is forbidden except in extraordinary circumstances.

Holy Communion is essentially a gift which God makes to us in return for the gift we have offered to Him in the Mass. According to the liturgy it is a sacrificial banquet. As our Lord intended it, and as its name signifies, it is the gathering of brethren at table. Like a liege-lord who receives the homage of his vassals and then invites them to his table and keeps happy feast with them, so does God recompense the homage which we render Him in the Mass. And the recompense is worthy of Himself—the most precious thing in heaven and on earth, His only-begotten Son, who first puts Himself at our disposal to be our gift to God, and again puts Himself at the disposal of His Father to be His gift to us and the food of our souls.

It is quite superfluous to ask if Holy Communion should be an integral part of the Mass for all the faithful. The answer is plain from what has been said. It is plain from the words of the prayer following the Consecration: "That as many of us as, by participation at this altar, shall receive the most sacred Body and Blood of Thy Son may be filled with every heavenly blessing and grace." Not that the Mass cannot be conceived without Communion, or that it loses anything of its intrinsic value; but without Communion the intrinsic idea of the Mass is not completely expressed.

Ought not Christians to understand the relation between oblation and communion as well as did the heathen in his merely natural religion who joined to the heathen sacrifice-oblation the sacrifice-banquet? This relation must be reasserted among us Christians and be made plain, especially to our Christian men. "The Sunday Mass without Communion of all the faithful lacks its most endearing feature, the gathering of the Christian family at the eucharistic table. The Church wishes all of us to receive Holy Communion every Sunday. This is no innovation or excess of devotion; it is a return to the practice of the first Christian centuries."[7]

The Pater Noster is the "table-prayer" which begins this portion of the Mass. It is placed here perhaps on account of its fourth petition: "Give us this day our daily bread" (though St. Augustine points to the fifth petition: "Forgive us our trespasses," as an act of contrition for daily sins made in preparation for Holy Communion).

Throughout the prayers that follow runs one main thought, petition for that peace which God alone can give. Peace is the dearest gift of the Christian re-

[7] *Lenten pastoral* of Adolf Cardinal Bertram, Bishop of Breslau, of the year 1914. See also his *Kirche und Volksleben* Breslau, 1916.

ligion, peace within and without, peace with self and with fellowmen, and most of all with God. Two of the prayers, which are of later date, beg the blessing of worthy and fruitful Communion.

Holy Communion unites us with Christ by His temporary eucharistic presence and by His abiding grace. Thus the general idea of union with the Godhead which is, as we have seen, the dominant motive of the entire Sacrifice of the Mass, here appears in the intimate form of personal union with Christ which is the characteristic note of the sacrifice-banquet.[8]

A brief prayer in thanksgiving for the eucharistic-banquet and with petition for abiding grace and eventually for heavenly glory brings the whole drama to an end. It is brief; first, because the entire Communion portion of the Mass is the concluding act of the Mass-drama, and second, because the distribution of Communion to many leaves ample time for private prayer of thanksgiving.

[8] The earliest evidence with which I am acquainted for the present rite for the Communion of the faithful at Mass (i.e., Confiteor, Misereatur, Indulgentiam, etc.) is found in the Dominican *Missale Conventuale* of the 13th century. See W. Legg, *Tracts on the Mass,* H. B. S. London, 1904, pp. 84. The direction reads: "When a large number of people are waiting for the end of Mass, the Communion of the religious may be postponed till after Mass"; otherwise the distribution of Holy Communion shall precede the Communion-antiphon. This rite undoubtedly reflects the new viewpoint which became general after the year 1000. See above in Chapters IV and V.

Then, after the greeting: *"The Lord be with you,"* and its answer: *"And with thy spirit,"* the assembly is dismissed with the words: *"Ite missa est," "Go, the Mass is ended";* and before the people leave the priest invokes God's blessing upon them so that the day thus begun in the Lord may be well spent in His honor.[9]

May the liturgical revival of the present day bring to realization the Church's wish that the liturgical prayers, which were composed for the use of all the faithful, again be used intelligently by all of them. The liturgy will prove a powerful force to effect a much-needed inner renovation and purification and deepening of Christian life.

[9] I cannot in this present book discuss the many interesting questions, theological or general, which arise out of the liturgy of the Roman Mass. See my *Die Opferanschauungen der Römischen Messliturgie,* Regensburg, Pustet, 2 ed. 1924; and my *Opfergedanke und Messliturgie,* Regensburg, Pustet, Eng. transl. *The liturgical Sacrifice of the New Law,* St. Louis, Herder, 1926. The purpose of the present volume is to set forth the fundamental ideas and the main structural lines of the Mass liturgy, and thus to bring about a better understanding of the noblest drama of divine worship ever known to mankind. Compare my articles: *Zur Katachese über das hl. Messopfer,* in *Katachetische Blätter,* Vol. 5, 6 Munich, 1922; *Zum liturgischen Unterricht uber die hl. Messe,* ibid. Vol. 5, 6, 1923; *Die Lehre des Romischen Katechismus vom hl. Messopfer,* ibid. Vol. 2, 1924; *Die Messopferlehre des Einheits Katechismus,* ibid. Vol. 6, 1925; *Zur Predigt uber die hl. Messe,* in *Kirche und Kanzel,* Vol. 2, Paderborn 1922. For a brief outline of the structure of the Mass see *Zur Liturgie der hl. Messe,* in *Virgo Mater* (Teachers' Sodality of Mary), Vol. 8, 9, Munich, 1923; and *Missa,* Regensburg, 2 ed. Pustet, 1925.

## Chapter IV

### The Sacrificial Banquet of Holy Communion

*"We have an altar whereof they have no power to eat who serve the tabernacle" (of the Old Law).* (Heb., 13:10.)

The enthusiasm which greeted the decree of Pope Pius X on Frequent Communion seems to have undergone a certain decline with some of the faithful. Many excellent Christians complain that they are not able to arouse the intense feelings of devotion which most prayer-books seem to demand in preparation for Communion and in thanksgiving. They feel that they cannot continue from day to day, or from week to week, to exert the great spiritual effort, the total closing of the senses to the outside world, the close concentration and application of the forces of the soul, which seem to be demanded for the worthy receiving of our Lord in Holy Communion.

The consequence is that precisely those who are most conscientious conclude that it is better for them to receive the divine Guest less frequently. They quiet any self-reproach that their conscience may

make by saying either that they have not made sufficient preparation or that they have not attained a high enough degree of love to be worthy of this daily intimacy with the Most Holy.

Hence there is reason for questioning if our goal has not been set too high, if we are proceeding in the right way, if our whole spiritual outlook in this matter is according to God's will and proportionate to our human nature. We shall do well to face the question: In what spirit, in what frame of soul should we approach Holy Communion?

This question has come up repeatedly in recent years. It is often worded in this way: Should Holy Communion be received during Mass or outside of Mass? And if we examine the question in this wording, both in itself and in its history, we shall find that it can hardly be answered in a simple categorical way. In the early Christian centuries Holy Communion was administered both during Mass and outside of Mass, and to the present day the Church recognizes (and also demands) certain reasons which justify Communion outside of Mass. We shall here consider the question according to what Catholic dogma and liturgy tell us of the relation of the Christian soul to our Lord in Holy Communion. And the answer will appear in due course.

When one examines the "devotions for Communion" that are found in our ordinary prayer-books and observes how they first stress the thought of our nothingness in the sight of God and try to plunge the soul into a deep abyss of self-contempt, and then immediately expect the soul to mount to the heights of seraphic love—one wonders if the thing is psychologically possible. These very pronounced emotions may be possible occasionally, at extraordinary times and in extraordinary circumstances. But we cannot force them day after day without doing harm to the naturalness and normal good health of the soul. And whatever is so disproportionate to our human nature cannot be the will of God in our regard.

How comes it that our prayer-books urge us to strive so anxiously for these intense feelings of humility and love? Why this continual imploring of the Blessed Mother and the saints to make up for our deficiencies and to help us to do what we cannot do alone? There are, it seems, three principal ideas which have determined the form and content of our "devotions for Communion".

First: our Lord is conceived as the all-holy God who comes to the miserable sinner, as the heavenly bridegroom whose infinite love does not disdain our unworthiness. The soul accordingly is moved to bow down in

self-abasement—and all the more with the added thought of trying to atone somewhat for the indifference and of the offenses of the many who pay no heed to God.

Second: Holy Communion is conceived as something separate from the Sacrifice of the Mass, it is removed from its proper place in the whole liturgical order of which it is a subordinate part. People come to think that they may receive Communion at any time; indeed they rather prefer to receive Communion before Mass and to turn the Mass into a "thanksgiving after Communion;" or, if they communicate during Mass they make the whole Mass a preparation for Holy Communion which they regard as the supreme moment toward which all effort must be bent. The Mass is in danger of becoming no more than a means of effecting the real presence of Christ for the sake of Holy Communion.

From these two there follows a third: Holy Communion comes to be conceived as a "devotion", the first of all devotions assuredly, because of the real presence of Christ, but none the less an individual private devotion. And as our modern "devotions" seem to appeal strongly to women (especially when notable spiritual benefits are attached) may this not help to explain the fact that men appear somewhat

reluctant to approach Holy Communion and need to be organized into societies so that they will receive Holy Communion in a body and thus overcome their fear of seeming to appear "overly pious."

What did our Lord Himself mean Holy Communion to be? And what does His Church mean it to be? How has Holy Communion been understood throughout the history of the Church? What place has been given it in the ensemble of the liturgy? What does history tell us both as to the precepts of the Church and the practice of the faithful in regard to Holy Communion? Inquiry of this kind should help us to a correct understanding of Holy Communion and should indicate the best and most fruitful way of approaching it.

Picture a scene from the days of Christ's ministry by the Lake of Galilee. It is the day following that on which He had fed thousands by the miraculous multiplication of five loaves of bread. The people, raised to a pitch of enthusiasm, had cried out: "This is of a truth the prophet that is to come into the world." They would have taken Him by force to make Him King, but He escaped from their midst. And now, on the next day, He speaks again to the same multitude, bidding them believe in Him as the Messiah sent by God, believe in Him as the bread of supernatural life,

promising that whosoever will eat and drink of Him will hunger and thirst no more but will have life everlasting.

"I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that if any man eat of it he may not die. . . . If any man eat of this bread he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world. . . . Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood you shall not have life in you. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life and I will raise him up in the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed and My blood is drink indeed" (John, 6:48).

The meaning is plain; and the main ideas are accentuated by repetition.

What the Lord demands is faith in Him; but at this particular moment not so much faith in His divinity as faith in His mission by the Father to be the bread of life for men. It is a faith that contains the recognition of Him and His purpose and He insists upon that. It also implies adoration and homage but He does not insist on that at this time. He repeats over and over that He is the bread of life, the heavenly food of the soul. He bids men come and receive Him

for their own soul's sake. And more than that; for He says: "the bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world." Therefore not our food simply but sacrificial food, food that has been given, sacrificed, for the redemption and renovation of the world; offered therefore both to the heavenly Father and to mankind; a gift of homage to the Father in the sacrifice-oblation of Calvary and the Mass, and a life-giving gift to men in the sacrifice-banquet of Holy Communion. Thus in our Lord's mind, as expressed in His words on this occasion, Holy Communion is not a "devotion" to Him, not an act of adoration or homage to His divinity, but His gift to us and the heavenly food for our frail humanity.

And now picture another scene. It is the eve of Christ's passion and He sits at table with His twelve Apostles to eat the Paschal Supper according to the rite of the Old Covenant. The paschal lamb has been slain and offered in the Temple and is now to be eaten in the domestic circle in a ritual repast with prayer and ceremony. The Lord is about to institute the Pasch of the New Covenant. He took bread and giving thanks (certainly in some way an oblation to the Father), He broke and gave to His disciples, saying: "Take ye and eat; this is My body which shall be delivered for you; this do for the commemoration of

Me." Then, after they had eaten, He took a chalice with wine and giving thanks He gave to them, saying: "Drink ye all of this; for this is My blood of the New Testment which shall be shed for you and for many unto the remission of sins; this do for the commemoration of Me."

The promise made by the Lake of Galilee is fulfilled. Christ gives to His Apostles the oblation of the New Covenant, His own body and blood. And these are given to them in Holy Communion not to be adored (nor to be offered to God as a gift of homage for that is already done in the oblation part of the sacrifice) but to be received for their soul's sake and for the commemoration of Him. He desires to be their food and drink, and not simply but in a sacrificial way; to be the medium of their union with the Father in the sacrifice-banquet as He is the medium of their homage to the Father in the sacrifice-oblation.

The extant sources of the history of Holy Communion in the first Christian centuries are not abundant. But such as they are they tell us two things: Communion is a sacrificial banquet and it is an integral part of the Mass for all who are present.

St. Paul in warning the Corinthians against the service of idols uses the well-known words: "The

chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord? . . . For we being many are one bread. . . . Are not they that eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? . . . The things which the heathens sacrifice they sacrifice to devils and not to God. And I would not that you should be made partakers with devils; you cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord and of the table of devils" (I Cor., 10:16).

In the same epistle (I Cor., 11:20) St. Paul uses the phrase "to eat the Lord's Supper" as meaning the celebration of the Christian mysteries. His meaning is clear for he goes on to relate the story of the Last Supper with the Lord's bidding to do this in commemoration of Him.

Therefore in St. Paul's mind, as in the mind of our Lord, Holy Communion is not something separate and apart from the Sacrifice of the Mass; it is the meal that follows the oblation. This is plain from the comparison which he makes with the corresponding oblation and meal in the Jewish and Pagan rites. "We have an altar whereof they have no power to eat who serve the tabernacle" of the Old Law (Heb., 13:10).

And again he says: "For as often as you shall eat this bread or drink this chalice, you shall show the

death of the Lord until He come" *(*I Cor., 11 :26*)*, that is, you shall commemorate His death. Here again appears the logical connection of oblation and communion. For the death of the Lord is the sacrifice of Calvary which is renewed in the eucharistic sacrifice of the Mass.

The Fathers of the ancient Church testify to the common understanding of their time that in Holy Communion we receive the body and blood of the Lord in a sacrificial manner, the same body and blood once offered for our redemption in the sacrifice of the Cross and now in the glory of heaven still a perpetual sacrifice in the presence of the Father.

St. Augustine says: "This is the blood of our sacrifice and the nourishment of our soul which we do not withhold from anyone, as the Jews did, but to which we invite all those who would have life." Pope St. Leo I speaks of that blood which is "both our ransom and our drink." Another of the Fathers speaks of the chalice which contains "the blood of Christ's passion which daily is given us from the altar for our strengthening." Amalar of Metz, explaining why the Holy Sacrifice is not celebrated nor Holy Communion received from Maundy Thursday until Easter Eve, says that we wait until Christ by His actual passion gives to His eucharistic body and blood the character

of oblation and by His resurrection gives them the glorified character and then we again offer and receive this sanctified and sanctifying Gift. Others again, speaking of the Mass as the renewal of the sacrifice of Calvary, call it the "oven" in which the eucharistic bread is prepared as our food or the "wine-press" in which the precious blood is prepared as our drink. St. Athanasius exhorts that we receive this sacred food and drink" with joy and fervor because it is the sacrifice of our redemption."[1]

In the early Christian centuries the Sacrifice of the Mass was not celebrated daily but whenever it was celebrated all who were present received Holy Communion. While the Christian communities were comparatively small they had an intimate sense of being one family and a vivid feeling that the good things of the Redeemer were the common property of all. At their liturgical assemblies the bishop presided; about him were gathered the priests, the deacons, the rest of the clergy and the laity and thus from the altar arose to God the united homage of all. It was therefore quite an inconceivable thing to be present and to participate in offering the sacrifice and then not to partake of the sacrificial banquet of Holy Communion. These first Christians while yet Jews or Pagans had understood

[1] See an abundance of such texts in: De la Taille, *Mysterium Fidei*, Paris, 2 ed. 1924, p. 255.

the connection of sacrifice-oblation and sacrifice-banquet. Would they lose sight of it now when their sacrificial food was their very Redeemer Himself?

Children also received Communion which was given them at Mass immediately after their baptism, under the species of wine if they were infants and under both species if they were older.[2]

The faithful stood erect throughout the Holy Sacrifice and received Holy Communion standing, the clergy at the altar or in the sanctuary and the laity at the chancel limits (corresponding to our communion-rail) or at their ordinary places. The priests and deacons gave them, into their outstretched right hand, the

[2] The portion remaining from the eucharistic banquet of the adults was sometimes given to the children on the following day, a custom which continued into the 6th century. Children also received the Viaticum before death. In the 9th century there appeared a movement in opposition to children's Communion. This arose from the feeling that little children were not able to recognize and to duly venerate the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. By the 13th century it had become the rather general custom to withhold Communion from children, although in Sweden the opposite custom continued into the 15th century. As the Communion of adults became less frequent, the Communion of children disappeared almost entirely. The Council of Trent did not extend to children the obligation of receiving Holy Communion, because little children who are incapable of committing grievous sin have not lost the divine life of grace imparted to them in Baptism. In our own days the tendency, approved by Church authorities, is to advance the age of receiving Communion to that age at which children are able to distinguish the eucharistic Bread from ordinary bread. The Code of Canon Law states that the obligation of receiving Communion at least once a year rests upon all who have passed the age of discretion, that is, the use of reason (Canon 859, 1).

sacrificial Bread with the words: "The Body of the Lord", and then the chalice from which they drank. Deacons or others carried Holy Communion under one or both species to those who were not able to be present at Mass.[3] Bishops exchanged with each other the sacred species of the Masses they had celebrated as a sign of their unity in Christ.

Mass was not celebrated daily in the early times but seemingly only on Sundays and certain other days. Hence from the desire of the faithful to receive Communion more frequently there arose the custom of taking to their homes the Bread of Life to reserve it there and to receive it in the morning before all other food. Thus by the second century we have record of daily Communion becoming a custom before daily Mass. And thus too came the custom of fasting before Communion at least when Mass was not celebrated. Daily Communion in this manner flourished especially in the days of the persecutions. For when the Christians were liable at any moment to have their faith put to the test by the order to sacrifice to idols, they wished to be fortified by that "bread of the strong" which comes from the altar of the one true God.

[3] The custom of permitting women to distribute Holy Communion (outside of church) is found as late as the 9th century; for the synod of Paris of the year 829 forbids this.

In the fourth century there appears a notable decline in religious fervor. Christians no longer reserved and received the Holy Eucharist in their homes but received only when they assisted at Mass. And various abuses and negligencies appeared. The Council of Saragossa of the year 380 felt obliged to excommunicate those who merely took the sacred Bread into their hand without actually receiving it. St. John Chrysostom in Constantinople repeatedly complains of the neglect of Holy Communion. He reproaches some who stayed away from Mass and others who assisted at Mass but did not communicate and others who communicated only at Easter time. In the monasteries the practice of frequent or daily Communion continued. And the devout laity seem to have kept up the practice of weekly (Sunday) Communion into the Middle Ages as the Synod of Aachen of 836 witnesses.

But the general decline of frequent Communion continued and became more pronounced. Church authorities felt obliged to prescribe a minimum for all who wished to be considered Catholics. The Council of Agde in 506 and that of Tours in 813 ordered that Holy Communion be received on the three great feasts of Christmas, Easter and Pentecost. Yet even this minimum was not observed. The Lateran Council of 1215 obliged Holy Communion once a year at

Easter time. Attendance at Mass on Sundays was also made obligatory by church legislation. There were still some local efforts to oblige Holy Communion three times in the year but these were not successful.

One is naturally inclined to ask what were the causes of this decline from the high level of piety which marked the early centuries; for it was always recognized as being a decline.

First there is the fact that there came a general decline in religious devotion when the danger of persecution by the imperial government was removed. And when the Church received State recognition by Constantine's toleration-edict of Milan in 313 and Christians entered freely into public life, a worldly spirit became rather widespread in the Church. But these considerations do not explain the whole case. They do not explain the decline in zeal for Holy Communion among the good and fervent Christians.

A further explanation is to be found in a somewhat changed attitude of the Christian mind in regard to devotion to Christ the Lord.[4] In the early days the

[4] It has recently been suggested that this is an instance of the influence of the new germanic element in the Roman Empire and in the Christian Church, a view which overlooks the fact that the phenomenon is general and found in regions where there was no germanic influence.

faithful had thought of Him mostly as their Redeemer and Mediator. He was the Holy One sent by the Father; He was the way by which mankind might come to the Father; He was the food of the soul's supernatural life, the gift offered to the Father in the sacrifice-oblation and given in return by the Father to His children in the sacrifice-banquet. Throughout St. Paul's epistles and the writings of the Fathers of the apostolic age the same one thought recurs again and again: through Christ to the Father. The prayers of the Church are addressed to God the Father "through Christ our Lord". Of course Christians were fully conscious that their Lord was the divine Son, but the depths of the theology of that divine Sonship had not yet been sounded.

There come now the great dogmatic controversies which brought out profound theological treatises on the nature and person of Christ and precise dogmatic definitions by the Church, especially from the fourth century onward, against christological heresies. It had become necessary to insist that Christ is the true Son of God, of the same nature as the Father, God equally with the Father; and to insist also that He is true man, with human body and human soul, human nature assumed by the Divine Word but not absorbed by His divine nature, with human intellect and human

will, but (and here is the weighty point in our present concern) adorable in His humanity with the adoration due to God because of the intimate union of the two natures in one divine person. The great councils of this period, from that of Nicaea in 325 to the Trullan Council of Constantinople in 680, are so many stages in the course of this dogmatic development.[5]

A consequence of this development was an ever-growing reverence toward the eucharistic Christ, present on the altar under the humble appearances of bread and wine but thought of now with more particular attention to His divine nature. There was no objective change in the matter but there was a change in the subjective disposition of the faithful and that in the direction of greater reverence of a certain kind. Thus it came about that both in East and West the very best Christians showed a certain timidity and hesitation in regard to frequent Communion. At the same time, and partly for the same reason, we find bishops warning the faithful not to approach the holy table unworthily and recommending daily Communion only to those who had attained a higher degree of Christian perfection. In this way there arose a certain confusion of duties and precepts. On the one hand it

[5] Very important in this regard is the contribution of Jos. Jungmann, *Christus im liturgischen Gebet,* in *Liturgiegeschichtliche Forschungen,* St. 7.

seemed necessary in some respects to urge the faithful to receive Holy Communion more frequently and on the other hand and in other respects to warn them against careless and unworthy Communion. The general result was less frequent receiving of Communion.

The eucharistic controversy which arose in the West in the ninth century regarding the right understanding of the real presence, had a similar effect; it increased reverence and diminished the frequency of Communion. Since the seventh century private Masses had become more common, in which the faithful did not receive Communion. And since the ninth century unleavened bread was used in the Mass and the faithful no longer brought their personal offerings of bread.[6] Thus they came to lose sight to a considerable extent of the solidarity of the entire Christian community in the sacrifice-oblation and sacrifice-banquet. Berengar's error in regard to the real presence and the resulting controversy in the eleventh century both emphasized the significance of the real presence and suggested a number of practices of adoration and homage.

Thus the course of years shows an increasing timidity and hestitation in regard to receiving Holy Com-

[6] See Thalhofer Eisenhofer, *Handbuch der katholischen Liturgik*, II. p. 347.

munion, and on the other hand a tendency to create adoration devotions apart from the eucharistic sacrifice.

Benedict of Aniane and Theodulf of Orleans witness to the continuance of daily Communion in monastic houses to the end of the ninth century. But in the tenth and eleventh centuries in the monastery of Cluny, the very center of a reform movement, there was not even weekly Communion. In the *"Customs"* of that great abbey we find a direction that on Sundays five hosts should be consecrated "so that those who wished might communicate".[7] The Dominican lay-brothers in the thirteenth century received Communion only four times in the year. The *"Constitutions"* of the Brigittines (of the year 1370) allow Holy Communion five times in the year. King St. Louis IX of France was accustomed to receive Communion six times in the year and St. Elizabeth of Portugal three times in the year. By the sixteenth century it was almost an understood thing that the laity should not receive Communion more than once in the year. And all this out of reverence for the hidden majesty of God.

[7] Compare Browe, *Die Kommunion in der gallikanischen Kirche der Merowinger und Karlowinger Zeit,* in *Theol. Quartalsch,* 102, 1921, p. 22.

The same principal of reverence brought about accidental changes in practice. Instead of giving the eucharistic Bread into the open hand of the recipient, it became the custom in the sixth century to insist that the hand be covered with a cloth; and by the ninth century the custom was to give the eucharistic Bread into the mouth of the recipient. Popes Leo I and Gelasius I are cited to show that it was still the custom in the fifth century to give to all to drink from the chalice. By the ninth century the sacred species of wine was still received by all but for reasons of carefulness or of hygiene the use of a small tube of silver or gold had been introduced. By the thirteenth century Communion of the laity under the species of wine was generally omitted. And the recipient no longer stood but knelt to receive Holy Communion.

The gradual appearance of ideas and practices regarding the direct adoration of the Holy Eucharist as an object of worship is no doubt a logical and proper development. One should not think of relinquishing them. But it is also true that in the course of this development there was a certain failure to keep clearly in view the vital and all-important connection of all parts of eucharistic worship with the very center of it, that is, the holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Veneration of the

Eucharist without regard for the Mass was bound to lead to misunderstanding and neglect of Holy Communion.

Various expedients were adopted in order to maintain the feeling of connection between the sacrifice-oblation and the sacrifice-banquet. Such for example was the distribution of the "eulogiae" or breads blessed at Mass by a simple blessing but not consecrated and given to those who did not receive Holy Communion. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the kiss of peace was explained in a similar way. Some authors think that the blessing at the end of the Mass and the "prayer over the people" which occurs in some Masses were likewise meant somehow to be substitutes for Holy Communion.

However, during all this time, whenever Holy Communion was received it was received during Mass and called by the name "oblation".

The practice of distributing Holy Communion outside of Mass seems to have originated with the Mendicant Orders of the thirteenth century in their efforts to promote frequent Communion. And as in earlier times there had been attempts to find some sort of substitute for Communion at Mass, so now there was effort to find a substitute for the Mass to accompany the separate administration of Communion. This is

the origin of the various prayers in preparation for Holy Communion which emphasize the ideals of self-oblation and of desire for the Lord. Here too is the beginning of that mental attitude which eventually made of Holy Communion a "devotion" and the beginning of that state of things which Pohle describes in a few words when he says: "The original and deeper meaning, viz., to partake of the sacrificial banquet, is no longer familiar to the people."[8]

But the various efforts to restore frequent Communion were not successful. The indifference of the greater number went on increasing, as did also the timidity and hesitation of the devout Christians.

Moreover, even among theologians the right understanding of the Mass as a sacrifice and of Communion as the sacrificial banquet was obscured. Attention to the essence of the Mass was distracted by an overgrowth of fanciful symbolism. And where the sacrificial character of the Mass was still recognized there was not a clear understanding of the essence and purpose of the entire action.

Thus was the soil prepared for the Protestant errors regarding the Holy Eucharist. Luther maintained that the Mass was a mere symbolic representa-

[8] Pohle-Preuss, *The Sacraments*, II, p. 3.

tion of the passion of Christ and not at all a real sacrificial oblation to God, in which latter sense he condemned the Mass as idolatry. For Luther, the Mass was merely a communion-rite, a Lord's Supper. And thus the severence of Communion from the Mass was carried by the Prostestants to the extreme of heresy. They managed to arouse popular antipathy to anything like sacrificial character in the Mass and Communion so that even many Catholics were affected. Indeed, one contemporary declares that he would "suffer any loss, even that of life itself, rather than receive Holy Communion during Mass."[9] Communion-service and Sacrificial-banquet became two opposed concepts corresponding to the opposition between Protestants and Catholics.

The Catholic revival of the sixteenth century brought about a change in these eucharistic matters. The Council of Trent went to the roots of the entire question and reached a solution which was both proportionate to human nature and in accord with the revealed will of God. In the sixth chapter of its decrees regarding the Mass, the Council expressed its wish that the faithful assisting at Mass should also receive Holy Communion so as to share all the more in the

[9] *Beati Petri Canisii Epistolae et Acta*, ed. O Braunsberger, S. J., IV, 725, 727, 729.

fruits of the Holy Sacrifice. The Council maintained against the Protestants that private Masses (celebrated without a congregation and therefore without Communion of the faithful) were permitted and approved in the proper circumstances but expressed a higher regard for those Masses at which the faithful assisted and received Holy Communion. "The holy synod indeed wishes that the faithful who are present at Mass also receive Communion, but where this is not the case does not condemn those Masses in which the priest alone communicates."[10]

The great leaders of the Catholic reform advocated more frequent Communion. St. Charles Borromeo urged the parish priests of his diocese to return to the ancient custom of giving Holy Communion to the people at Mass. St. Peter Canisius in his labors throughout Germany was much concerned to explain the meaning and value of the Mass and to persuade the people to assist at Mass on all feast-days and to receive Communion. All his reform program was based on his conviction that assistance at Mass and

[10] Denz. 944. During the discussion at the Council of Trent on the subject of Communion under one or both species, the Spanish theologian, John Viletta, delivered an address in which among other things he brought out the idea that while there may be a logical distinction between participation in the Sacrifice and partaking of Communion, yet the two are really one and belong together as forming one whole. (Co. Trent. ed. Soc. Goerr. VIII, 592). This address so impressed the fathers of the Council that they at once ordered it to be printed.

reception of the sacraments, that is, the revival of the liturgy, should be the outward note of the Catholic reform movement in opposition to Protestantism. And it may be said in general that: "there was not a single one among the leaders of Catholic piety in the sixteenth century in whom God had not inspired, in direct opposition to the spirit of the age, a deep and intimate love of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass along with the desire and the gift of manifesting and imparting this love to others."[11]

The fruits of this revival had just begun to ripen when the false spirit of Jansenistic rigorism arose within the Church. The Jansenistic heretics considered that whole classes of the faithful, such as married people and those engaged in commercial occupations, were unworthy to receive Holy Communion and they demanded as a requisite the most perfect love of God.

This heresy marks the extreme point reached by that tendency which made the Eucharist an object of adoration rather than a source of supernatural life, which latter was our Lord's primary intention. The popes condemned the Jansenist error. But people in general are inclined to regard a strict opinion as a

[11] H. Bruders, S. J., *Die liturgischen Gegensätze zwischen den 16 und 20 Jahrhundert,* in *Liturgie und Kunst,* 1920-21, 110-116. See also O. Huf, S. J., *De z. Petrus Canisius en de Liturgie, in Tijdschrift voor Liturgie,* 1921, pp. 226-248 and 302-325.

good opinion because it is strict and even though it runs counter to higher ideals. The anti-clerical spirit of Josephism carried the Jansenist views down to our own times. These views persist unconsciously in many minds and traces of them are found in our prayer-books to the present day.

One needs to look back over this entire historical sequence of eucharistic conceptions and practices in order to be able to appreciate the importance and the he had in view involves a return to the liturgical pronouncements of Pope Pius X. His action was a stroke of genius pointing the way toward a renewal of the true Christian spirit. The liturgical revival which he had in view involves a return to the liturgical understanding of Holy Communion, that is, an understanding of Communion as the sacrificial banquet of the Christian community.

We may conclude from this historical survey that every departure from that understanding of Holy Communion which was intended by our Lord, has had unfortunate consequences. In His mind there was an intrinsic connection between Communion and the Sacrifice of the Mass of which Communion is an integral and the concluding part. And He intended

Holy Communion primarily for the good of human souls and not primarily for the adoration of Himself.

From this it follows that Holy Communion should be regarded not merely as a "devotion for pious souls", but rather as the center and main-spring of all Christian life and our Lord's fundamental precept to His followers.[12]

And now to return to the question as to when Holy Communion should be received, that is, whether before Mass, or during Mass, or after Mass, or apart from Mass altogether, there can be only one answer resulting from our study. The ideal thing, the best and most logical and most satisfying in every respect, is simply and solely Communion during Mass. For this alone fulfills all the demands made by the dogma, liturgy and history of the Holy Eucharist.

And we are now in position to understand why the Church does and should require reasons for the receiving of Communion in exceptional cases outside of Mass, reasons mostly of practical necessity. We should all join in united effort to attain the ideal goal of the sacrificial banquet of Holy Communion, priests as regards the giving and people as regards the receiving of Communion, "so that as many of us as, by

[12] See Chapter I of the present book.

participation at this altar, shall receive the most sacred Body and Blood of Thy Son may be filled with every heavenly blessing and grace."[13]

But someone may ask: "Are not the "devotions for Communion" the result of a legitimate development in eucharistic devotion and therefore quite correct. Why consider that the practice of the early Church is the only right one and that it leaves no room for any other? Are there not throughout the history of Christian devotion similar developments which everyone accepts? Does not the ancient practice of administering the Viaticum in the hour of death, a practice accentuated and prescribed by the Council of Nicaea, show that Holy Communion has a recognized place in the liturgy apart from the Mass? Why regard Holy Communion exclusively as a sacrificial banquet and not also as a sacrament; especially since the character of sacrificial banquet is essentially expressed in the very fact that Christ becomes present under the appearances of food and drink no matter when or where or how these are actually received? Granting that Christ in the long eucharistic discourse recorded in St. John's Gospel does refer in passing to the sacri-

[13] *Canon of the Roman Mass.*

ficial character of Holy Communion, can it be said that He especially emphasizes this aspect? And finally, does not the Church provide a "devotion for Communion" in the prayers recommended for preparation and thanksgiving which are appended in the Missal?

For answer to these questions let us turn first of all to the Church herself, who alone is authorized by Christ to utter competent decision. Fortunately we have at hand official pronouncements of recent date.

Both the Ritual and the Code of Canon Law regard Holy Communion as a part of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the priest and for the people.

The Ritual in its latest edition of 1925 has the following to say regarding the distribution of Holy Communion: A distinction is made between distribution of Communion within the Mass and outside the Mass, or better, independently of the Mass or in connection with it. The direction regarding Communion outside the Mass is placed first because the Ritual is concerned chiefly with things that lie outside the Mass and the Missal. It shows that the Church recognizes that there are reasons which sometimes justify the receiving of Holy Communion without direct connection with the Mass.

The Ritual then goes on to say:[14] "The Communion of the people should take place immediately after the Communion of the priest who celebrates the Mass (though occasionally and for a sufficient reason it may take place immediately before or after the Mass when the Mass in a private one) for the prayers which are said in the Mass after Communion refer not only to the priest but also to the other communicants." After describing the rite of distribution, the Ritual continues:[15] "Should it happen that a few here and there communicate immediately before or after a private Mass . . . etc."

Thus we see (and this is the point newly brought out in the latest edition of the Ritual) that the Church entirely excludes Communion before or after any Mass which is not a "private Mass", and allows it before and after a private Mass only for a special reason and, as the text plainly shows, as an exception to the rule. We are not told here whether a "private Mass" means a Mass which is not chanted, that is, private in contradistinction to the parochial High Mass, or whether it means the opposite of any public Mass. In the first case the prohibition then is of Holy Communion before or after High Mass. In the second case the prohibition extends to all Masses celebrated

[14] *Rit Rom.* ed. 1925, Tit. 4, C. 2, N. 11.
[15] ibid. N. 13.

in parish churches in supplement to the High Mass on Sundays and feast-days of obligation in order to give all the faithful opportunity to assist at Mass, i. e. practically all the parochial Sunday and feast-day Masses. Inasmuch as the Ritual direction has in mind Canon 846 of the Code (which does not use the technical term "private Mass" but says: "when he celebrates privately") it is likely that the second alternative is meant. On the other hand it may be argued that the Ritual direction probably does not intend to modify the earlier Decree of January 19, 1906,[16] according to which the distribution of Holy Communion before or after a High Mass or a chanted Mass is forbidden, but its distribution before or after a private Mass may be presumed to be allowed. Whichever alternative is the correct one, one thing is certain, namely that the Church (unlike many of our pastors and people, not to mention our religious communities) regards the receiving of Communion immediately before or after Mass as something exceptional and not the regular thing. And if it be said that the practice has become an established custom which has made the exception to be the rule, it is certain again that the Church does not admit this. For the Ritual says: "Should it happen that a few here and there . . . etc." How far

[16] *Decr. Auth.* N. 4177, III.
[17] See also the *Ritual,* Tit. 4, C. 1, N. 12.

from agreeing with this is the practice in many parishes and religious houses where all the Communions are either before or after Mass! Matters sometimes go on until they seem to have become fixed customs, and yet they can actually just as well be changed and had better be changed. The Church's ideal of the Communion of the people also appears in the direction to priests to use the plural form even when they give Communion to only one person.

The Code of Canon Law encourages the faithful "when they assist at Mass to communicate not only spiritually but sacramentally."[18] Again we read: "Every priest may administer Holy Communion during Mass and also, when he celebrates privately, immediately before or after Mass."[19] We are told that on Saturday of Holy Week Communion may be given only during Mass and immediately after Mass.[20] We are told in general that Holy Communion should ordinarily be administered within the hours[21] in which Mass may be celebrated and in places where it is permitted to celebrate Mass.[22]

Thus in all circumstances the Church adheres to the principle that Communion belongs with the Mass,

[18] Canon 863.
[19] Canon 846.
[20] Canon 867.
[21] ibid.
[22] Canon 869.

though she leaves room for the demands of practical necessity.[23]

No wonder then that the chief advocates of the restoration of Communion as the sacrificial banquet are precisely those who are noted for their part in the present eucharistic and liturgical movements.

Jules Lintelo, S. J., a well known apostle of eucharistic devotion says:[24] "The right understanding of the intimate connection of Holy Communion with the Mass assures the best formation of the communicant and the best guarantee of his perseverance in eucharistic devotion."

[23] Reference may here be made to the so-called Napoleonic Catechism, prepared in 1806 for all churches throughout the French Empire. In the edition authorized by Marcus Aurelius Berdolet, Bishop of Aachen, for his diocese, we read in Part 3, Instruction 13:

"How should one prepare for Holy Communion?"

"As immediate preparation for Holy Communion one should assist with especial devotion at the Mass in which one is to communicate."

"Is it then correct to assist at Mass and to receive Holy Communion in that same Mass?"

"Yes, so far as this is possible; for this is the mind of the Church."

"At what part of the Mass is it most proper to receive Holy Communion?"

"Immediately after the Communion of the priest."

"Why?"

"In order thus to unite more closely with the priest in this Holy Sacrifice and to communicate at the same time as he."

The idea of "sacrificial-communion" is explained in Kramp, *Opferge danke und Messliturgie*, Regensburg, Pustet, Eng. transl. *The Liturgical sacrifice of the New Law*, St. Louis, Herder, 1926.

[24] *Semaine liturgique de Louvain*, 1913, p. 266.

The Thalhofer-Eisenhofer manual of liturgy says:[25] "Sacrifice-oblation and sacrifice-banquet go together. . . . This heavenly banquet is prepared for the faithful by the Consecration, in which the one great Sacrifice of Calvary is mystically renewed, so that Communion is the fruit of the Sacrifice, the sacrificial banquet which belongs not to the essence but to the *integrity* of the Sacrifice. *The faithful* participate in the oblation of the Mass as members of the mystical body of Christ. And being *joint-agents in the oblation,* they are *also partakers by right in the sacrificial banquet* which until late in the Middle Ages was administered regularly only during Mass and under both species." This manual then goes on to quote the words of the Council of Trent which express the wish that those who assist at Mass will also communicate not only in spirit but sacramentally.

The English liturgist, Herbert Lucas, S. J., says:[26] "It is worthy of remark that logically, and one may even say historically, the eucharistic sacrifice is prior to the sacrament, since the reception of the latter is essentially a participation in the former, and pertains to its integrity. The sacrament, as received by the faithful in holy communion, is the fruit of the sacrifice. It is not merely the body and blood of our Lord

[25] *Handbuch der katholischen Liturgik,* II, 194. Italics as in the original.
[26] *Holy Mass* 1, 2, London, 1914.

. . . but His body and blood under the special aspect of a victim . . . And this is a point on which it seems desirable to lay some stress."

Eugene Vendeur, O.S.B., says:[27] "Holy Communion may not be treated as a simple "devotion" for it is a liturgical act of the first rank. Its liturgical character must be preserved. It must be kept in its liturgical setting. One must prepare, and receive, and give thanks in a liturgical way. . . . And the liturgy of Holy Communion is simply that of the Holy Mass."

Leonce de Grandmaison, S. J., says[28] in criticism of a widespread custom: "Holy Communion is regarded by many not merely as actually separable from the Mass, but as really, and one might almost say normally, distinct from the Mass, of which it is, on the contrary, an integral part."

Romano Guardini is perfectly right when he says:[29] "The eucharistic movement will not yield the fulness of its blessing until it is merged with the liturgical movement. The Pope who issued the Communion Decree is the same Pope who said: 'Do not pray during Mass but pray the Mass'. Holy Communion will not be able to effect the spiritual renovation of human

[27] *La Sainte Messe entendue pour communier souvent,* 35th thous. Maredsous, 1918.
[28] *Etudes,* Dec. 1919.
[29] *Vom Geist der Liturgie.*

society which Pope Pius X had in view until it is understood in accordance with the liturgy."

Testimonies like these might be multiplied at will. They are all conceived in the one same spirit and it is the spirit of the Church as expressed in her own instructions. That same spirit will furnish us with answer to the questions asked above.

Study of the Eucharist in history shows that every period of religious revival has been marked by a return to the ideal of Holy Communion as the sacrificial banquet. That is the mind of the Church today and of those who best understand the mind of the Church. And therefore the tendency to regard Holy Communion as something independent of the Mass does not deserve to be called a "legitimate development".

It is true that the Council of Nicaea did emphasize the giving of Holy Communion as Viaticum in the hour of death and this precept has been repeated over and over down to the present day. There is here a development insomuch as we today do not celebrate Mass expressly for the administration of the Viaticum, as was sometimes done in the ancient days.

But the change that has come about in this respect does not imply any change in the understanding of

Communion as the sacrificial banquet. For the early Christians sometimes received Communion outside of Mass. When they did so they nevertheless regarded Communion as a participation in the Sacrifice. This is plain, for example, from St. Paul's words regarding the use of food that had been sacrificed to idols (I Cor. 8:4; Rom. 14:15) and from the constant association of Communion with the Mass that appears throughout the writings of the Fathers. No matter when or where the early Christians received Holy Communion, they always regarded it as the bounty of the Lord and of His table, His altar of sacrifice.

Let that same understanding be ours. What better Viaticum, what better preparation for our entry into eternal life, than the continual and living union with our Lord in His saving sacrifice; a union which finds its completion in the sacrificial banquet of Holy Communion!

Why speak of sacrifice-oblation and sacrifice-banquet as of they were not the same thing? Is not the sacrament of the Eucharist the sacrament of the altar? Baptism is the sacrament of initiation, Penance that of reconciliation, and Extreme Unction that for the sick. The Eucharist is peculiarly the sacrament of the altar or the sacrament of the sacrifice; made at the altar and given from the altar-table as the food of the sacrifice.

The sacrificial food of which St. Paul speaks is none other than that food of the soul of which our Lord speaks in the discourse which St. John records, except for the addition of a further historical event. St. Paul's words are but an amplification of the briefer statement of our Lord which St. John records: "The bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world" (John 6, 52).[80]

All the sacraments have an outward element which signifies their inward effect. The water of Baptism signifies the washing out of sin and the infusion of new life. The oil of Confirmation signifies the strengthening of the soul. The tradition of visible objects in Holy Orders signifies the conferring of spiritual office and power. The outward contract of Matrimony signifies the inward union of two souls. In like manner the visible element in the Eucharist signifies not simply union with Christ but union with Him as our oblation to the Father and the food of our soul. The symbolism of the bread and wine oblation as portraying the offering of life, Christ's life and ours in one, has been explained in a preceding chapter. To this is added the further symbolism of bread and wine

[80] In this whole question see the excellent treatment by O. Huf, SJ., *De hl. Communie als Offerspijs. Beschouwingen over de liturgische Communieopvatting, Maastricht*, 1923; especially Chap. IV, *Van Zielespijs en Offerspijs.*

in the sacrificial banquet in which we are united with Christ, the food and life of our soul, completing and crowning the former union of our life with His in the oblation. This was the understanding in the minds of reform leaders like St. Peter Canisius when they insisted upon Communion during Mass and thus championed the Catholic conception of Communion as the Sacrifice-banquet in opposition to the Protestant conception of the Communion-service or the Lord's Supper. For, as the Fathers of the Church declare again and again, in Holy Communion we receive not simply Christ but Christ as our sacrifice.

To the contention that the sacrifice character of Holy Communion is "essentially" expressed by the mere fact that Christ becomes present under the appearances of food and drink, we may simply reply: then why not go a step further and say that the sacrifice character is essentially expressed even if no one receives Communion! Why is our Lord present under the appearances of food and drink if not that He may be received as the food of the sacrificial banquet?

The argument that the prayers recommended in the Missal justify the "devotions for Communion," betrays a very cursory reading of those prayers. They are entitled: Preparation for Mass and Thanksgiving after Mass. Examination of their content will show

that those composed by St. Ambrose (which make up the larger part of these prayers) are thoroughly imbued with the understanding of Communion as a part of the Mass.

The liturgy itself recognizes one case (outside the cases of practical necessity) in which Communion is received (by the priest) without direct connection with the Sacrifice of the Mass, namely, the "Mass of the Presanctified" on Good Friday. And what is the Church's disposition in this case? She does not offer the eucharistic sacrifice on this day which she devotes exclusively to the memory of the sacrifice of Calvary. But she enacts a dramatic and symbolic representation of the tragedy of Calvary in which the priest receives Holy Communion in a setting which makes it appear the direct fruit of the Sacrifice of the Cross.

Thus the Church in her understanding of Holy Communion always holds faithfully to its sacrificial character. The present eucharistic movement in favor of frequent Communion must have the same right, fundamental conception and the right content throughout which will assure its permanent development; otherwise it will slacken and fail before long. The foregoing historical survey has shown us what is the right understanding of Communion. It will be the task of the clergy, diocesan and regular, to make this

understanding prevail, to point out the way to the faithful and to guide them in a right eucharistic practice conformed both to human nature and the revealed will of God. What we need is simply a return to viewpoint and mind of the Church, the teacher of truth.

In religious houses one often hears it objected that there is difficulty on account of lack of time. If the beginning of Mass is advanced by so much time as is required to distribute Holy Communion before Mass, the thanksgiving after Mass will end at the same time as it does now. In parish churches when the number of communicants is large Communion should be distributed by more than one priest so that the service will not be unduly prolonged.[31]

All who participate in the offering of the Mass have the right and find it natural and "almost obligatory"[32] to partake of the sacrificial banquet. All who bring their gifts to God should share in the gift which God gives in return. All who have joined with Christ in the self-oblation of the sacrifice should approach in joy and gratitude to be united with Him in the sacrament. All who have offered the Mass together, with

[31] And in case there is only one priest, it seems that to make a regular custom of separating Communion from its place in the Mass is more deplorable and out of accord with the rules of the Church than is the custom of non-communicants leaving before the last blessing in order to go to their work.

[32] E. Vendeur, op. cit.

one mind and heart, with the same oblation-gift, in one community drama, should in the same community spirit gather as one family about the table of the Lord. For they are all one in Christ's redemption and in His grace and joint-heirs in His eternal glory. And hence the Eucharist is called "Communion" as being one particular instance of the multiform union of all the faithful with Christ and with each other. In all the old religions sacrifice-oblation and sacrifice-banquet were the center and heart of the religious social sense. St. Paul has no hestitation in saying the same of the Christian altar and the Christian community.

## Chapter V

### The History of Eucharistic Adoration

Every truly religious soul has experience now and then of interior conflict and of states of spiritual tension. It is sometimes difficult to adjust the seemingly opposite demands of inward piety and outward calling, to place in right proportion the claims of time and of eternity. When trouble of this kind becomes deep-seated it may mean a long and painful struggle. One's station in life and one's education, one's character and cultural formation, are factors in the case and contribute eventually, either in the finding of a solution or perhaps in bringing on a more or less serious catastrophe. This kind of experience in individual life has its parallel in the life of nations and in periods of history; analogous processes appear in the history of religious devotions and practices.

It is instructive to observe the placid development of eucharistic worship during the first Christian centuries, to study the causes and the motive forces in the eucharistic movement which appears about the year 1000, to mark the consequent crisis in devotional life and to witness the solution which makes the Holy

Eucharist a direct object of worship, and then to trace the succeeding stages of development and the appearance of new problems and new solutions down to the present day.

In this whole course of eucharistic history we find something of that conflict which appears repeatedly in human life. In this case it is a conflict between the feelings of reverence and love. On the one hand there is a kind of holy shrinking from too great familiarity with the divine Lord, and on the other hand a free and confident approach to Him. And thus the history of eucharistic devotion shows a movement of rise and fall, of trend this way and that, of which our own period shows its own particular phases. Throughout all its course appear the two conflicting emotions already mentioned, which appear also in all the various spheres of man's devotional life—the feeling of reverence which is inclined to cover and conceal the secrets of the heart, and that of ardent love which does not hesitate to pass the bounds of the inner life and to show itself whether before friend or foe.

These varying attitudes of Christian consciousness in the matter of eucharistic devotion are due fundamentally to the very nature of the Eucharist itself. For the Eucharist is at one and the same time both "res" and "persona", a thing and a person, a means to an end

and an end in itself. As a thing, or a means to an end, the Eucharist is the sacrifice-gift which we give to God in oblation and which He gives to us in communion. But as an end in itself the Eucharist is the very person of Christ Jesus our Redeemer. The Eucharist is both the supper of the Lord and the Lord of the supper, the simple food of human souls and the adorable King of Glory. And the attitude of our devotion will vary accordingly as we regard the Eucharist in one or the other of these two aspects.

Customary outward signs of respect vary from age to age and according to ways of thinking. With us today courtesy demands the uncovering of the head at certain times and in certain places. But among other peoples having a different civilization and culture, courtesy demands the very opposite.[1] The outward sign owes its significance to the understanding and intention of the given age or people. We must not imagine that what is customary now was always so or will always continue. And we must remember that simple faith may be satisfied and pleased with a custom which a higher degree of intelligence and culture would not find suitable.

It is our custom today to genuflect before the Holy

[1] So indeed throughout Europe until the end of the Middle Ages and even within the church building.

Eucharist. But we must not consider another age to be lacking in reverence because it did not employ the genuflection. The Eastern liturgy to the present day prescribes a profound bow in place of our genuflection. The latter was introduced in the Roman liturgy only toward the end of the Middle Ages and became a ritual precept only at the time of the liturgical reforms of Pope Pius V in 1568. Hence we may say that it is a comparatively modern custom. The Mass ordos from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries furnish interesting data on this point.[2]

To our present way of thinking it is a most natural thing to reserve the Holy Eucharist on our altars and to adore our Lord really present there by visits and acts of personal homage apart from the liturgical action of the Mass. When we speak of the church as the house of God we are apt to understand the term as meaning the dwelling place of our eucharistic Lord. And yet all this was not precisely the mind of the Christians of the early centuries.

We experience a decided devotional appeal in the exposition of the Holy Eucharist and in eucharistic processions. And yet this particular mode of eucharistic homage was not common until the thirteenth century. During a part at least of ancient times there was a

[2] See the author's article, *On kneeling before the Eucharist,* in *Zeitsch. für katholische Theologie,* XLVIII, Innsbruck, 1924, pp. 154.

prevalent feeling that the Holy Eucharist should not be frequently exposed to view. The particular devotional feeling of that time considered that reverence demanded silence and the veiling of the Eucharist. What we consider marks of reverence would then have seemed a lack of reverence.

Ancient and mediaeval times were considerably influenced in these regards by oriental ideas. The modern age in its turn gave to divine worship the impress of its own style. In the days of modern monarchy forms of eucharistic adoration reflected to some extent the customs of the royal court. Christ is the King of kings and deserves homage similar to and surpassing that shown to earthly rulers.

In our study of past centuries we may sometimes find that the devotional customs of a period do not seem in keeping with the doctrinal ideas of the same time. We may find Christian people and Church authorities regularly or temporarily tolerating things that seem to us irreverent. But we must remember that the customs of actual life are not always entirely subject to strict logic, that reverence supposes an intelligence which comes gradually, and that understanding and practice do not move at exactly the same pace.

If we bear these things in mind we shall avoid a double danger; we shall neither misjudge the past nor

be too well satisfied with the present. We shall study the past intelligently and respectfully. We shall not propose to simply transplant the customs of the past into the present. And we shall also respect present customs without maintaining that these must last forever.

In the early Christian centuries the Holy Eucharist was regarded more as a means to an end than as an end in itself. We find no forms of eucharistic adoration apart from or independent of the sacrifice of the Mass. And homage to the Holy Eucharist is of negative rather than positive character, that is, it consists chiefly in the effort to avoid all that is unworthy.

St. Paul, with all his fervent devotion to the heavenly and glorified Christ, does not refer to the Holy Eucharist with the feeling of an intimate person to person relationship. In his mind the Holy Eucharist is the sacrifice of the Lord's Supper, the sacrificial Body and Blood of Christ. His thought is expressed in his well-known words: "Therefore whosoever shall eat this bread or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of the chalice" (I Cor. 11:27).

St. Ignatius of Antioch speaks of the Eucharist as the center of the entire life of the church, since at the

holy Sacrifice of the Mass the bishop, priests and people are gathered in one mind and with one united prayer about the altar of sacrifice and so appear as the mystical body of Christ, made one by the Eucharist which binds all in one body under due rulership. St. Justin speaks repeatedly of the "consecrated food," the "bread blessed with thanksgiving," the "wine mingled with water," by which terms he evidently refers to the transubstantiation which takes place at the Consecration in the Mass. St. Cyril of Alexandria calls the Eucharist a "tremendous mystery,"[3] tremendous, because in it the very Son of God is really present, and (as he once insists against certain unbelieving monks) not only within the Mass but also outside it.

If we examine the devotions of the early Christians we shall find that the Eucharist was the very sum and substance of the devotional life of the early Church. It was the apex of her liturgy, the final purpose of all her assemblies. And yet the early Church regarded the Eucharist more as "res" than as "persona" as a means to an end rather than as an end in itself.

This emphasis of the "means aspect" of the Eucharist appears in various ways. The faithful are permitted to take the Eucharist home from Mass and to reserve it there, to be received on days when the Mass was not

[3] *Homil.* 10 *in mysticam coenam.*

celebrated. The Eucharist was sometimes laid upon the bodies of the dead prepared for burial and sometimes even placed with them in the tomb. It was sometimes given to the sick as a medicine in a way that seems to us to be trifling. Documents of extraordinary and solemn import were sometimes signed with a pen dipped in the consecrated wine as witness to a sacred oath.

The writings of the Fathers tell us of some special marks of reverence shown toward the Holy Eucharist, but these are usually of a negative rather than a positive character, the avoidance of anything unworthy and the exclusion of unworthy persons from the sacred mysteries. Origen, Tertullian, Hippolytus and Cyril of Jerusalem all insist on care lest any of the consecrated bread fall to the ground or lest the consecrated wine be spilled. St. Cyril in his instruction to catechumens tells them that in receiving Holy Communion they should hold their hands in such a way as to form a throne for the eucharistic King, and that the word "Amen" which they say in reply to the words of the priest at the moment of receiving should be spoken as a word of adoration and homage. He also recommends the then general custom of looking upon the Holy Eucharist before receiving, and he further advises them to touch with the finger their lips still moist with the blood of the Lord and so to sign their forehead and

eyes and ears in petition for Christ's blessing to both soul and body.

St. Augustine refers to the attitudes of bowing and prostration at Communion time. St. John Chrysostom tells his people that their deportment at Communion should be as that of angels, their eyes cast down, their countenance expressing humility and their whole bearing prompt like that of soldiers awaiting and welcoming their king. Eusebius of Caesarea speaks of kneeling at Communion time and of a profound bow of adoration but it is not clear whether he means adoration of the eucharistic Lord or of God the Father. The *Apostolic Constitutions* (8-13) direct the bishop to say in giving Communion: "The Holy of Holies," to which the people are to answer: "The Lord is God (the eucharistic Christ) and has appeared among us."

At one period in ancient times, and especially in the East, it was thought proper to veil the Eucharist from the eyes not only of strangers but of the faithful. The altar was surrounded with curtains which were closed at the moments of Consecration and in the East a chancel screen or ikonostasis was erected, the doors of which were closed at the Consecration. Until well into the Middle Ages we find theologians discussing the question as to whether one in mortal sin might behold the Eucharist without committing further sin, and more

than one theologian answered in the negative. St. Thomas Aquinas was of the opinion that all the baptised might gaze upon the Eucharist but that others should not be permitted. During the early period while the catechumenate was maintained, the mystery of the Eucharist was included in the "discipline of the secret," that portion of Christian doctrine which was withheld until after baptism. The use of symbolic representation of the Eucharist in the catacomb paintings, such as the figure of the fish with loaves of bread or of the lamb with a vessel of milk, indicate that the eucharistic doctrine was veiled from more than the pagans. To the present day the Church prescribes that the Holy Eucharist be reserved in a covered ciborium or pyx and that this vessel be further covered by a veil and kept in a closed tabernacle which should also be veiled. All these rules are so many expressions of the general feeling of reverence for the Holy Eucharist. It was the spirit of reverence in ancient times that once suggested the idea of withholding the Eucharist from the gaze of women during pregnancy. And a similar spirit of reverence suggested the prescription of the Coptic liturgy (as recorded by Gabriel of Alexandria of the fourteenth century) that the priest must cover the paten which contains the sacred particles "so that these will not be exposed to the gaze of the people."

## *EUCHARISTIC ADORATION*

In the early centuries there were practically no regular forms of eucharistic adoration apart from the liturgy of the Mass, though it is true that such do occur incidentally here and there. There was as yet no well developed consciousness of the significance of the real presence of our Lord as a divine Person to be Himself adored directly in the Eucharist. That consciousness came gradually and did not find outward expression for some time longer. In the early days when the holy Sacrifice was celebrated in private dwellings a table was prepared for the occasion and removed after the service. And even when special church buildings came to be erected there was as yet no thought of reserving the Holy Eucharist for extra-liturgical adoration.

What forms of eucharistic adoration we do find in the early centuries are therefore subordinate to the liturgy. And in the liturgy the Eucharist is primarily sacrifice, sacrifice-oblation to God the Father and sacrifice-banquet for the good of souls. Hence homage was not rendered to the Holy Eucharist chiefly as an end or object of worship in itself but as a means whose object was the honoring of God the Father and the sanctifying of mankind. Of course this manner of regarding the Holy Eucharist did not exclude certain expressions of homage directed to the eucharistic Saviour in the liturgical words and acts, such as those

mentioned in the *Apostolic Constitutions,* the priest's words: "The Holy of Holies," and the people's answer: "The Lord is God and has appeared among us." And the liturgical practice of reposing the Holy Eucharist on Thursday of Holy Week and returning it on Good Friday must at an early date have provided some kind of adoration practice in that interval. Thus we read in the *Chronicon Paschale* of the year 645 that a procession took place during which the people knelt and sang hymns.

The Eastern liturgies were the first to devise rites for the celebration of a Communion service on days when the Mass was not celebrated. In this service we find words and acts of direct adoration of the Holy Eucharist, such as the "prostratio" or "prosternatio," an act of kneeling joined with a profound bow, an attitude which the orientals borrowed from the customs of the imperial court. This service also included a procession in which the "praesanctificata" or the "praeconsecrata," that is, the Holy Eucharist consecrated in the previous Mass, was borne by the priest under a covering of veils and with various marks of homage. The name "praesanctificata" came to be a common designation of the Holy Eucharist throughout the East, whereas in the West the name "sacrificium" was the common term until well into the Middle Ages. The later development of eucharistic adoration which ap-

peared in the West is not found in the East and the customs of the East still remain at a stage which makes eucharistic adoration quite distinctly subordinate to the liturgy of the Mass.

In the West down to the twelfth century there is less evidence of homage to the Eucharist apart from the Mass liturgy than there is in the East. There is record of kneeling on the part of the people during the eucharistic procession on Good Friday and at Communion time. There is also one instance of a regular act of adoration, namely the salutation of the Eucharist by the bishop in the entrance procession before Mass. It was customary to reserve a portion of the Holy Eucharist from one Mass to another in order to signify the continuity of the unending sacrifice. The reserved portion was brought forth in the following Mass and at the breaking of the bread and the mingling of the bread and wine it was placed in the chalice along with a portion of the sacred bread just consecrated in the second Mass. The reserved portion is called in the Roman Ordos the "sancta." According to the *Roman Ordo I* the "sancta" was brought forth by an acolyte as the Pope entered for the Mass; the Pope paused and looked to see if the quantity was more or less than required for the commixtion ceremony; and at this point the *Ordo I* mentions that the Pope bows in sign of adoration before the "sancta." According to *Ordo II*

the vessel containing the "sancta" has been placed on the altar before the arrival of the papal procession and we are told that the Pope on arriving at the altar adores the "sancta." We are not told in what exactly the sign of adoration consists, but it was no doubt a bow of the head or body, for the genuflection was not yet customary.[4]

One is naturally inclined to ask here: "What about the reservation of the Holy Eucharist and homage shown to the reserved Eucharist?"[5] Mention has al-

[4] I cannot agree with Hoffmann when he says (*Die Verehrung und Anbetung des allerheiligsten Sacraments des Altars*, Kempten, Kösel, 1897, p. 163) that a kind of exposition of the Blessed Sacrament appears in the practice mentioned in *Ordo Romanus II* which states that the "sancta" was placed on the altar and remained there throughout the Mass. The presence of the "sancta" had a meaning and purpose quite different from our exposition. And no particular regard was given to the "sancta" throughout the Mass until the ceremony of fraction and commixtion. If Hoffmann is right we ought to regard every Mass celebrated on an altar where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved in the closed tabernacle as a Mass "coram Sanctissimo." The same criticism applies to the opinion of Raible (*Der Tabernacle einst und jetzt*, Freiburg, Herder, 1908, p. 101). Hoffmann is right in questioning whether the kneeling of the people during the papal entrance procession, in which the "sancta" was carried, was an act of eucharistic adoration; for it may have been an act of homage to the Pope. On the other hand one cannot cite the similar case of the Good Friday procession for that is of considerably later date. Lanfranc first mentions it as a custom of the Benedictine monks of Canterbury in the 11th century. And the elevation of the Eucharist before the Pater Noster, to which Hoffmann refers, is, as the accompanying words show, an act of homage to the Father.

[5] Compare the monumental work of Joseph Braun, SJ., *Der Christliche Altar in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, Munich, Guenther Koch, 1924, Vol. 2, p. 574.

ready been made of the custom of sending the eucharistic species, wrapped in linen cloths, to private homes, usually by the deacons, so that Holy Communion might be received on days when the Mass was not celebrated. We do not find any record of special marks of homage prescribed on such occasions. No doubt the Holy Eucharist was treated with the greatest reverence. But this was, as already said, mostly in a negative way. Anything resembling the honor paid in homes by the pagans to household gods would probably be avoided by the Christian converts from paganism.

It was customary from the very earliest times to administer Holy Communion to the dying. The 13th Canon of the Council of Nicaea of the year 325 orders: "The old rule of the Church shall be observed, according to which when anyone is near to death he shall not be denied the last and most necessary Viaticum." For this reason bishops and priests reserved the Holy Eucharist in their homes, unless in cases such as that of the death of St. Melania in 439, where we find that Mass was celebrated expressly in order to supply this Viaticum Communion.

The *Apostolic Constitutions* (8-13) prescribed that after the holy Sacrifice the deacons carry what remains of the Holy Eucharist to an adjoining room similar to our sacristy.[6] We are not told exactly in what way it

[6] Pastophoria.

was there reserved but we may imagine the greatest reverence and carefulness for we are told that special containers were provided for the Gospel books. Certain it is that the Holy Eucharist was not reserved in the church itself. A statement on this point which comes from St. Augustine is not clear; it may mean that the Eucharist was reserved in the sacristy, especially since there is also mention of the place where the Gospel books are kept.[7]

The vessel in which the Holy Eucharist was reserved was a pyx made of ivory or of precious metal. It came to have the form of a casket, and later of a dove. Such vessels were not large and contained only a few consecrated particles, only enough to serve for the Communion of the dying. The body of the faithful received Communion during Mass and bread and wine were there consecrated in quantity sufficient to serve for the Communion. Ordinary names for the Holy Eucharist were: "sacrificium," "sancta," "oblationes"

[7] The reader may judge if Raible is correct (*Der Tabernacle einst und jetzt*, p. 34) in speaking of a "visit to the Blessed Sacrament" in the case of Alexander, Bishop of Constantinople. The historian Socrates relates that Alexander, when ordered by the emperor to receive Arius back into the Church, "had recourse to Jesus, shut himself in the Church of St. Irene, cast himself upon the floor beneath the altar and prayed to the Lord." It were rash to conclude from these words that the Holy Eucharist was reserved upon or beneath or behind the altar, especially since we know that the ancients were accustomed to regard the altar as a place of refuge.

or "oblata," and also "divinum donum corporis Christi." Sometimes the Eucharist was taken on journeys as a divine protection against dangers, in which case it was carried in a locket on the breast. Here evidently the Eucharist appears as a means more than an end, although in some instances of this kind there is record of direct adoration of the person of the eucharistic Lord. Both aspects, of means and of end, appear in a custom which prevailed until the ninth century according to which bishops sent to one another by the hand of deacons portions of the Eucharist which they had consecrated at Mass. These portions were placed in the chalice at the appropriate moment in the Mass. Here the Eucharist appears both as a bond of union in Christ and as the leaven of Christian charity.

It is not possible to determine at what precise time it became customary to provide a permanent place in the church for the reservation of the Holy Eucharist. In Rome we find that at the time of Pope Gregory I, about the end of the sixth century, the Eucharist was still kept in the sacristy. About the year 800 we find it kept either on the altar or in a vessel suspended above the altar. We find prescriptions coming down from the ninth century which regard the ornamentation of the altar and which state that nothing is to be allowed thereon except the relics of saints, the Gospel books and

the pyx containing the Eucharist reserved for the sick. The hanging tabernacle, in the form of a dove, was declared by the IV Lateran Council of 1215 to be less suitable because insecure against theft.[8] Hence tabernacles came to be built into the wall of the choir or sanctuary and in the Gothic period we find sacrament-houses built in turret form. The sacristy still remained a second place for reservation. All this shows a point of view very different from that of our own day, although there is not the slightest doubt about the recognition in those former times of the real presence. The altar-tabernacle in its present form dates from the sixteenth century. About the same time comes the development of the reredos or retable into which the altar-tabernacle was built.[9]

The ninth century theological controversy regarding the Eucharist, and still more that centering about the error of Berengar in the eleventh century, brought about a veritable "eucharistic movement" in Christian consciousness. The changes in mental attitude which

[8] Regarding mediaeval practices in the use of the Holy Eucharist from the viewpoint of culture and superstition, see A. Franz, *Die Messe im deutschen Mittelalter*, Freiburg, Herder, 1902, pp. 93-114.

[9] Various synods down to the 17th century speak of a Roman custom of reserving the Eucharist upon the altar and of a German custom of reserving it in a sacrament-house or a wall-tabernacle on the Gospel side of the choir. Compare Braun, S. J. *Liturgisches Handlexikon*, Regensburg, Pustet, 1924, article: *Retable;* and above all his above-mentioned work, *Der Christliche Altar*, Vol. 2, pp. 277.

it brought and the causes of these have been explained elsewhere and need not be considered at length here.[10] Suffice it to say that the person of our divine Lord in the Holy Eucharist was brought into clearer view, the Christian soul became more directly aware of the majesty of the God-man hidden in the Eucharist. With this gain in consciousness came an increased reverence and devotion toward the Eucharist in the "persona" aspect and in consequence new outward forms of homage. These latter appear first of all on the part of individuals of extraordinary piety (such as St. Francis of Assisi and St. Juliana of Liege), and next in widespread popular devotions, and finally by the action of popes and councils are given place in the liturgy and find their climax in the feast and office of Corpus Christi.

Thus especially after the thirteenth century in contrast to the disposition of earlier times we find the disposition to regard the Holy Eucharist with direct and devout attention to the person of the eucharistic Lord and to delight in devotional practices, both liturgical and extra-liturgical, in which love and fervor overcome the older feelings of awe and reverence and the desire to behold the Lord in the Eucharist prevails over the

[10] Compare Kramp, *Messliturgie und Gottesreich*, Vol. 1, pp. 19; and his *Opfermahl oder Kommunionandacht* in *Stimmen der Zeit*, 102, 1921, pp. 209; and above in Chapter IV.

older practice of veiling Him from sight. The change is due, as history shows, to the closer attention now given to the person of our Lord in the Eucharist.

We are familiar with the words of the hymn composed by St. Thomas Aquinas: "Tantum ergo sacramentum veneremur cernui," which in a well-known English version are rendered: "Down in adoration falling, lo, the sacred Host we hail." Here is evidence of the new attention to the person of our Lord in the Eucharist and of the new tendency to depart from the older devotional reserve and to give visible expression to love and reverence for the eucharistic Christ. The Church directs that at these words in St. Thomas's hymn, although we are already kneeling we shall bow in adoration of our Lord. This act of homage bespeaks our direct veneration of our divine Lord in the Holy Eucharist and, historically considered, it recalls the new and epoch-making trend in eucharistic devotion in the days of St. Thomas.

It is a notable fact that this new trend has the character of a popular movement which the Church authorities approve with at first some apparent reluctance or hesitation. And in proportion as they give their approval and leadership, the more insistent is the demand for the further unfolding of the content of the Church's eucharistic treasure. Sometimes the Church was obliged

to take action against abuses and exaggerations and to set limits to innovation. But the currents of the general trend persuaded her repeatedly to make new concessions.

It appears that a large part of the impulse in this movement came from the German lands, where also as a natural consequence we find a good many of these prohibitions on the part of the Church authorities. And to the present day there have always been among the German people many ardent advocates of eucharistic devotion who have not fully understood the prudence with which the Church adheres to her traditions and guards the devotional life of her children.[11]

We cannot here recount at length the many forms of eucharistic homage which arose in those days out of popular fervor and were approved by the Church. It will suffice to refer to a few of them.

A characteristic note of the new period is the more frequent use of the word "sacramentum" (mystery). This word had of course been used to some extent in

[11] It would be incorrect to explain this 13th century movement as due to "the independence of the germanic spirit, its preference for a freer play of effect, its dislike for antique and ancient Christian reserve"—for the movement appeared quite as much in England, France and Italy. Nor in any case should one deny the values which it brought to the Liturgy and to Christian life, even though it entailed certain faults as all human things do.

earlier times, but heretofore the more commonly used word was "sacrificium" (sacrifice-gift). The change in the use of words denotes a change in point of view. The Eucharist is indeed a veil of mystery behind which the Lord of heaven and earth chooses to conceal Himself, the mysterious guise in which the God-man abides among us and keeps us mindful of His life and death for our salvation. The Eucharist is a living and a mysterious memorial of God's love for man and at the same time the very compendium of our Saviour's perpetual love. It is a fountain-spring of grace and power to which man turns in his need and in heavenly desire, powerful and attractive as being not merely a sign of God's loving-kindness but the very Son of God Himself who is given us as our food and drink. The Eucharist is the pledge of our future glory, for it is Christ, "the first-born of many brethren," who has reentered the glory of His Father bidding us to expect the same eternal life.[12] Such thoughts as these had come to the fore in Christian consciousness and stood identified with "the Sacrament of the altar." The Christian soul became so enraptured at the rich content of the thought of Christ's real presence in the Eucharist as to neglect somewhat the older favorite thought of the

[12] Compare the *Bull of Urban IV* on the occasion of the institution of the feast of Corpus Christi in 1264.

sacrifice-oblation and sacrifice-banquet and allowed these to sink into the background.

From then on more attention was given to the tabernacle. It was no longer considered fitting to reserve the Holy Eucharist for the sick in a rather informal way as had been customary. A proper dwelling place must be provided for the eucharistic Lord and it must be beautiful and reverent. Sacrament-houses and wall tabernacles were built of marble or of precious metal and were prominently located. The tabernacle itself was often covered with precious veils and a lamp was kept always burning before it both to invite the attention of visitors and as a symbol of perpetual adoration.

When the Eucharist was carried to the sick it now became the custom for the priest to vest in surplice and stole and to be accompanied by a server who sounded a bell to announce the coming of the Lord. Numbers of people often joined to form an escort of honor.

Eucharistic prayer was developed in the sense that it now became a favorite custom to spend time in prayer before the tabernacle, a custom cultivated especially in convents, notably in those of the Dominican nuns. The Eucharist was sometimes reserved in the nuns' choir, or even in the convent quarters, but eventually the Council of Trent ruled that it must be kept only in a public church or chapel.

As outward marks of homage we find in this period bowing, kneeling and prostration. But it is noteworthy that these seem to have been used indiscriminately into the fourteenth century. Indeed even in the sixteenth century we find theologians discussing as to whether at the Elevation in the Mass one should bow or kneel. The custom of not kneeling in certain seasons of the liturgical year was due no doubt to the influence of ancient tradition. These outward signs of homage were not universally adopted at once. For we find Gabriel Biel in the fifteenth century (d. 1495) reproving those who stand without any outward sign of homage at the Consecration; he himself suggests the folding of the hands and striking the breast.

Inasmuch as this eucharistic movement was deepfelt among the people it naturally showed some effect upon the regular liturgy before long. About the year 1200 we find the course of the Mass interrupted for a moment immediately after the first consecration and the sacred species of bread elevated so that the faithful might look upon and adore the Lord. The elevation of the chalice followed a little later. Duranti mentions it for the first time toward the end of the thirteenth century and in Rome we find it officially prescribed by the *Ordo XIV* of the fourteenth century. At the Elevation a small bell was rung to call the attention of

those assisting at the Mass and at a somewhat later date the great bell of the church was also rung for the information of those not actually present. The custom of singing at the Consecration was introduced in France under Louis XII about the year 1500, but Rome later forbade this, saying that it was more proper to be silent at this solemn moment.

The feast of Corpus Christi was instituted by Pope Urban IV in 1264. The purpose of this feast is explained in the papal bull. "As the feasts of the saints and anniversary festivals are marks of honor, so this new feast is intended to commemorate and render homage to the adorable presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist in a most splendid manner, surpassing the daily homage of the Mass and whatever other homage is rendered to the Holy Eucharist throughout the year. Let the faithful flock to the church and let clergy and laity lift united voice in glad and festive song. From mind and heart and mouth and lips let hymns of praise declare the joy of our salvation. Let faith be spoken forth and hope enlivened, let love exult and dedicate itself in jubilation. With hearts uplifted and with glad good-will let each and every one hasten to join in this magnificent feast."[13]

[13] *Bull of Urban IV.*

And how precisely is the feast to be solemnized? By the solemn celebration of the Divine Office and the Holy Mass in which the greatest possible number are urged to participate. So says the papal bull. And in fact there are few formularies in the Breviary and the Missal that can compare with that of Corpus Christi with its thrilling mood and its marvellous expressiveness. And none of our modern popular eucharistic devotions can show anything like its profound insight and sensibility, its dogmatic discretion and its tenderness of memory.[14]

A peculiar feature of the feast of Corpus Christi is the eucharistic procession which seems to have been introduced for the first time in Cologne in the year 1279. The carrying of the Holy Eucharist in procession was not a novelty. The new feature is the unveiled and public exposition of the Eucharist. We have record of a eucharistic procession among the Benedictine monks of Canterbury in the eleventh century but on that occasion the Eucharist was carried in a veiled chalice. Whereas now the general fervor has prevailed over the former reverent reserve and insists on beholding the eucharistic Lord. For this reason a special vessel was devised, somewhat like a relic case and called a monstrance.

[14]. For a further treatment of the history and meaning of the feast see Kramp, *Messliturgie und Gottesreich*, Vol. 2, pp. 130.

By the second half of the fourteenth century it had become the custom to expose the Holy Eucharist in the monstrance, at first on the feast of Corpus Christi and later on other days also. The Benediction service at the end of the exposition came about as a natural consequence.

The Corpus Christi procession and the custom of Exposition and Benediction, and in general the whole new style of eucharistic worship, was taken up with great enthusiasm in Germany and there appeared a tendency to multiply the forms and occasions of such devotions. Eucharistic processions were held on various days of the year and in some localities on every Thursday. Here and there exposition of the Holy Eucharist seems to have become a regular feature of the Mass service. And as often happens in such matters, the original inspiration was gradually lost and there appeared a fondness for the spectacular and for outward show. The Holy Eucharist was made a mere "feature" to heighten the splendor of some particular feast. Hence the Church authorities felt obliged to intervene. A council at Cologne in the year 1452, under the presidency of the papal legate, Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa, ordered that exposition and the procession must be limited to the feast of Corpus Christi

and to a few other feasts when permission might be obtained from the bishop.[15]

These limits wisely set by the papal legate were transgressed by the pope himself when, in 1459, Pope Pius II granted to the Margrave of Brandenburg a permission regarding processions. This opened the way to further concessions. And before long the popular demand brought back the former state of affairs and revived the old abuses. The leaders of the Catholic reform in the sixteenth century took a determined stand against the existing situation, saying that it represented love of pomp and display rather than real devotion. But the popular demand was persistent. Thereafter we find bishops and councils repeatedly forbidding too frequent exposition and processions, and popes again granting dispensations, first permitting the exposition and carrying of the Holy Eucharist under veils and later granting the use of the monstrance. Thus it proved impossible to find a permanent practice that would satisfy the twofold demand of devotional intimacy and devotional reserve.

Protestantism exerted a certain influence upon Catholic practice in eucharistic worship. The Prot-

[15] Moreover in Germany the procession, even on the feast of Corpus Christi, soon took on the character of petition for good weather and crops (an older custom) and was no longer a procession exclusively of eucharistic adoration. Compare the prayers which are still customarily recited in Germany at the four altars in the course of the procession.

estants not only took exception to certain extravagances and abuses; they condemned all outward signs of adoration, especially the genuflection, for they denied the real presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. This produced a reaction on the Catholic side which insisted emphatically on the real presence and induced Catholics to assert their faith by extraordinary effort to show outward homage to Christ in the Eucharist.[16]

To refer briefly to the customs in eucharistic adoration which have arisen since the sixteenth century, mention should be made of the practice of visits to the Blessed Sacrament and of the various popular devotions which are conducted in the presence of the exposed Blessed Sacrament or before the tabernacle. We have also the Forty Hours Devotion and a custom which prevails in some dioceses (sometimes joined with the Forty Hours) of a cycle of expositions in the various parishes which approximates perpetual adoration.[17] And we have a number of societies and congregations especially devoted to perpetual adoration and prayer of reparation for neglect or insult offered to our Lord in the Eucharist. The first of these, founded by Catharine of Bar (Mother Mechtilde) dates from

[16] In order to secure the permission it was found useful to urge the need and the good of such public confession of faith.

[17] See Kramp, *Messliturgie und Gottesreich*, Vol. 1, pp. 211.

near the end of the seventeenth century.[18] There are also many eucharistic leagues and confraternities among the clergy and laity. Devotion to the Sacred Heart has been closely joined with devotion to the Holy Eucharist and a number of devotional practices have resulted. It may be said in general that no other period has been so marked by eucharistic devotion as is our present one. The Sacrament of the altar has become the very center of our popular devotional life.

Something should be said here of our public adoration and the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Mention has been made of the custom in that regard before and at the time of the rise of Protestantism. In the subsequent period the Jansenists very decidedly advocated the most extreme reverence in dealing with the Holy Eucharist and their influence is felt in France to the present day. The Jesuits set themselves to combat Jansenism and advocated a more affectionate and familiar disposition toward our Lord in the Eucharist. The official Church reserved to herself the regulation of the question and as regards public exposition of the Blessed Sacrament "has shown a restraining rather than a yielding disposition."[19]

The rules made by the Church are largely based on

[18] See Wetzer and Welte, *Kirchenlexikon*, I, 709.
[19] Hoffmann, *op. cit.* 272.

those which St. Charles Borromeo, in his desire to maintain a golden mean, made for his diocese of Milan. These were also the basis of the instruction issued by Pope Clement XI in 1731 regarding the celebration of the Forty Hours Devotion in Rome, a pronouncement which set a standard and exerted wide influence. In this instruction we are told that at the altar where the Blessed Sacrament is exposed no other Mass may be offered except the Masses of exposition and reposition. Even the votive Mass of the Holy Eucharist which is to be read on each day of the Devotion must be celebrated on some altar other than that where the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, and furthermore not on the altar where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved in the tabernacle. Even in cases where a conventual Mass is celebrated by obligation, it must be on some altar other than that of the exposition.[20]

Hence we may concur with Hoffman when he says: "Let it be noted that several of our present practices are not in accord with the spirit of the instruction of Clement XI, for example, the celebration of Mass at the altar upon which the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, which is not allowed except for the Masses of exposition and reposition; and the practice of exposition

[20] ibid.

during Mass is in direct contradiction of this regulation."[21]

The reason for the Church's rule in this matter is plain. From the liturgical point of view, this eucharistic adoration during the Mass disturbs the thought sequence and dramatic structure of the holy Sacrifice. The liturgical prayers mount up by steps of desire and appeal to the coming of the Lord, the sacrificial oblation of the New Law, at the Consecration, and if He is exposed for adoration in the Blessed Sacrament from the very beginning of the Mass the liturgical text loses its meaning. And from the view-point of reverence due to our Lord in the Eucharist, it does not seem proper to use Him, as it were, merely for the decoration of a feast-day. Hence the Church forbids the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at Mass when this is done for the mere sake of solemnity.

The new code of Canon Law contains precise directions regarding the reservation and veneration of the Holy Eucharist. We are told in what kind of churches the Blessed Sacrament may be and must be reserved. It may not be carried on journeys nor taken to homes.[22] The churches where it is reserved, especially parish churches, shall be open to the faithful at least during part of the day.[23] The Blessed Sacrament may not be

[21] ibid. 276.
[22] *Cod. Iur. Can.* Can. 1265.
[23] Can. 1266.

reserved in convents or religious houses except in the churches or chapels of such institutions, and in the case of nuns, not in the nuns' choir nor in the convent quarters.[24] It is to be kept on only one altar in a church and that should be the most prominent and worthy place in the church, hence generally on the main altar unless circumstances suggest some other arrangement. But where the choral recitation of the Divine Office is conducted before the high altar it seems better, in order that the direct eucharistic devotion called for by the presence of the Blessed Sacrament may not interfere with the Office, to reserve the Eucharist in a side chapel or on a side altar. The altar of the Blessed Sacrament should be distinguished by special ornamentation which will incite the faithful to devotion and prayer.[25] The tabernacle should be firmly fastened to the altar and located at its center. It should be solidly built and beautifully decorated for the sake of security and devotion. Where security seems to demand, it is permitted to remove the Blessed Sacrament for the night to a more secure place.[26] There are also particular rules regarding the sanctuary lamp,[27] the altar canopy[28] and the frequent renewal of the sacred Hosts.[29]

[24] Can. 1267.
[25] Can. 1268.
[26] Can. 1269.
[27] Can. 1271.
[28] Can. 1270.
[29] Can. 1272.

As regards the veneration of the Holy Eucharist, we are told that the faithful should be encouraged by assiduous instruction and exhortation to cultivate eucharistic devotion. They should be urged to assist at Mass not only on Sundays and feast-days but also on week days, and to pay visits to the Blessed Sacrament privately at their convenience.[30] Private exposition is permitted for any good reason at the discretion of priest or deacon without applying to the bishop. Public exposition in the monstrance is permitted ordinarily on Corpus Christi after Mass and at Vespers, and on other days for a good and grave reason, especially one of public character, and with the permission of the bishop (the extent of this permission to be announced in each church).[31] By private exposition is meant the exposition of the veiled ciborium, the tabernacle door being opened and the inner veils of the tabernacle being moved aside. The Forty Hours Devotion is to be held annually with the greatest possible solemnity in every church where the Holy Eucharist is reserved and on a day chosen with the approbation of the bishop. Where circumstances do not permit the regular holding of the Forty Hours Devotion there should at least be exposition for a number of consecutive hours and some special solemnities.[32]

[30] Can. 1273.
[31] Can. 1274.
[32] Can. 1275.

It would take us beyond our present scope were we to speak here even in a general way of the many regulations and exhortations of the Church regarding the Holy Eucharist as a sacrifice and as a sacrament. They show us how deeply the Church desires to promote the right cultivation of eucharistic devotion, how much concerned to keep the golden mean between intimacy and reverence and to preserve purity of style in devotion, that is, not to allow a confusion of eucharistic worship in its various forms with non-eucharistic worship and especially with liturgical worship.

With all her exhortations to practices of eucharistic adoration, the Church does not regard these as the chief substance of divine worship nor the principal part of it. Eucharistic adoration, insofar as it is liturgical, is only a part of the liturgy, and insofar as it is extra-liturgical, its place is secondary to the liturgy which is the official prayer of the Church.[33] The reasons for this judgment are set forth elsewhere and need not be repeated here.[34]

As regards contact with the Holy Eucharist apart from Mass and Communion, the Church wisely insists upon the utmost respect. How reverently she treats the eucharistic vessels. The chalice is kept veiled until the Offertory and the paten till the Pater Noster. How

[33] Can. 1268.

[34] See Kramp, *Liturgischer Dienst und eucharistische Volksandacht in der Karwoche* in *Theol. Quartalschrift*, Linz, April, 1924.

carefully she prescribes the veiling of the Eucharist itself and provides for due reverence in its exposition. The Church is well aware that matters of every day easily become matters of course and that reverence toward the Holy Eucharist is not increased by continual exposure of the Blessed Sacrament to public view. Her judgment in this matter may well be pondered by this present age which is so lacking in reverence toward sacred things generally.

There are those who, in their fondness for frequent exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, are slow to understand why the Church is so insistent upon rules and permissions in this regard. But those who are deeply imbued with the spirit of reverence understand at once.

Some of these rules are self-evident to all who understand what is meant by purity of style in devotion. "Everything in its proper time" is an Old Testament proverb. The liturgy is the worship which we render to God the Father in union with Christ, the God-man and our High-priest. Eucharistic adoration is the worship which we render to Christ our Lord. The Mass, including Holy Communion, belongs to the former. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament belongs to the latter. Hence we ought to understand why the two should not be confused, and why the Congregation of Rites has decided that Mass (read or chanted) in the

presence of the exposed Blessed Sacrament "is not permitted except for some necessity and for some grave reason and with special permission," and that "Holy Communion must never be distributed, whether during Mass or outside of Mass, from the altar of exposition."[35]

The peculiar thing about the Eucharist is that here we have our Redeemer, "the man Christ Jesus" (I Tim. 2:5) present among us. In heaven He sits "at the right hand of the Father" in His sacred humanity—not omnipresent therefore, but by a presence proper to His real humanity. And in the Eucharist the same "man Christ Jesus" is in a wonderful way made present in many places and in our midst. He, our Mediator and Redeemer, He to Whom we owe all Christian revelation and grace, He Who is our Way and Truth and Life, He Whom the Father has made our Advocate and Judge, Who in the last day will bring all things to the feet of His Father. All this is what the Holy Eucharist adds for us to the omnipresence of God—the presence of the God-man as such.

It is true that Christ is one with the Father; He is in the Father and the Father in Him; and who seeth Him seeth also the Father (John 14:9). But is it correct

[35] April 17, 1919, *A. S. S. XI*, 246; see also a decision of May 11, 1878 in *Decr. Auth.* n. 3448; and the treatment of the subject by C. Calewaert in *Ephemerides liturg.*, 37, 1923, 89-93.

therefore to speak of a "eucharistic presence of the Father?" Can we (as someone has said recently) behold the Father in the Host of the monstrance? No, for that would suppose some special presence of the Father in the Eucharist other than His omnipresence. And we cannot speak of any such! The Father is not more present in the Eucharist than He is by His omnipresence in the place which the monstrance occupies. There is no justification for speaking of a eucharistic presence of the Father. Indeed, if the Eucharist were no more than this "eucharistic presence" of the Father, or simply of God, we should be obliged to say that the Eucharist had itself no reason to be. Instead of "deepening" our conception of the Eucharist, we would undermine its reality.

How earnestly the Church strives to maintain the purity of her liturgical forms! How anxiously she guards her heritage of that revelation which says: our piety must not be directed to any single Person of the divine Trinity, and hence not primarily to the divinity of Christ in the Eucharist. A number of liturgical prayers which owing to special circumstances appear as exceptions to this rule, serve to emphasise the rule all the more strongly. And all conclusions which might follow from such devotion to one of the divine Persons are simply rejected by the Church.

The Church has had to oppose continually the demands of the professedly modern tendency of those who have considered that the liturgical prayers should no longer be directed to the Father as the source of all supernatural life, but rather to Christ. She has taken care that throughout the calendar of the liturgical year no feast be kept in honor of one single Person of the Trinity, but rather feasts of those mysteries by which the Triune God has entered into the sphere of our vision.

But let us hear the Church's own voice. Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical *"Divinum illud"* on the Holy Ghost (May 9, 1897) has expressed the very thought that concerns us here: "This is the Catholic faith, that we should adore 'God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity.'" Therefore our predecessor Innocent XII absolutely refused the petition of those who desired a special festival in honor of God the Father. For, although the separate mysteries connected with the Incarnate Word are celebrated on certain fixed days, yet there is no special feast on which the Word is honored according to His divine nature alone. And even the feast of Pentecost was instituted in the earliest times, not simply to honor the Holy Ghost in Himself, but to commemorate His coming, or His external mission. And all this has been wisely ordained, lest from distinguishing the Persons men should be led to dis-

tinguish the divine Essence. . . The worship paid to the saints and angels, to the Mother of God, and to Christ Himself, finally redounds to the honor of the Blessed Trinity. In prayers addressed to one Person there is also mention of the others; in the litanies, after the individual divine Persons have been separately invoked, a common invocation of all is added."

These words answer our question. Whoever would make one of the divine Persons especially and regularly the object of his adoration independently of the others, is very apt to incur the danger of introducing a distinction in the divine Nature. And hence the primary object of our eucharistic adoration is not the divine Person of the eternal Word in Christ Jesus, but rather the sacred humanity of Christ Jesus Who is also God. And all conclusions following from a special devotion to the divine Person of Christ in the Holy Eucharist are liable to depart from the way of truth.

Thus we are justified in saying that the Sacrifice of the Mass and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament do not belong together—and that on dogmatic grounds. For Exposition is concerned primarily with homage and adoration to the God-man in the Eucharist; while the Sacrifice of the Mass is an act of homage to God simply, which we are enabled to offer through the eucharistic God-man.

But is it not true that the rules regarding Exposition laid down by the Code of Canon Law are a "notable modification" of the older Clementine rules?

We are told in Canon 1274 that private exposition (with the ciborium) is allowed for any good reason and without need of applying to the bishop for permission; and that public exposition (with the monstrance) is allowed on the feast of Corpus Christi and during its octave at High Mass and Vespers, and at other times for good and serious reason and with permission of the bishop, even in the cases of churches of exempt religious orders.

Evidently there can be no question here about exposition during the Mass in the case of private exposition. For the Roman custom of private exposition is simply that the tabernacle doors are opened and the veils moved aside. During Mass therefore the vision of the ciborium would be cut off by the figure of the priest. As regards public exposition during the Mass on the feast of Corpus Christi, I cannot think otherwise than that this is merely a concession to the present times when in so many places the faithful are not able to render homage to the Eucharist by way of the procession and are not able to attend afternoon or evening services. It may be noted that this Canon (unlike the preceding one) uses the words "fieri potest," which

mean a permission rather than an order. And the latest edition of the Roman Ritual in its directions for the Corpus Christi procession does not suppose the exposition during the Mass; for the priest is instructed to consecrate two hosts—the second of which is to be placed in the monstrance after the Communion and to be carried in the procession after the Mass. Recent diocesan synods show the same mind, e. g. that of Cologne of 1922 which says in explanation of Canon 1274 that exposition after Mass is prescribed and exposition during the Mass is permitted.

Viewpoints change and customs change from age to age. The turn of the first thousand years in Christian history saw a notable change in the attitude of the Christian mind toward the Holy Eucharist. It resulted in a disposition which, within due bounds, undoubtedly implies a deeper consciousness of the meaning of Christ's eucharistic presence and of His adorable person generally.

A deepening of eucharistic consciousness it certainly was and a new stage of spiritual progress, this advance beyond the "means aspect" of the Eucharist and the logical and practical realization of the "person aspect" which the mediaeval mind attained. In the liturgy and in popular devotion the Person of the Redeemer in the Eucharist was now given that homage as the royal

Lord and Saviour which had long before been given Him in His heavenly setting in the mystic hymnody of the liturgy. The Eucharist, heretofore regarded chiefly as "res," was now venerated as "persona" in a soul to soul and love to love relationship. The abiding presence of Christ was now understood not only in the sense that the reserved Eucharist linked one Mass with another and established the continuity of the Holy Sacrifice, but also in the sense that in the reserved Eucharist the heavenly Christ permanently dwelt among men as of old in Galilee.

These were new aspects of the infinite riches of the Eucharist, whose unfolding gave joy to the Church and her children. All this is spiritual progress which the Church has formally recognized and recorded in the canonical instructions and regulations to which we have referred.

But on the other hand this development of eucharistic devotion undoubtedly involved a certain danger and does to this day, the danger namely of stressing one aspect to the neglect of others and thus of failing to realize the full wealth of our eucharistic treasure. It is a fact that we have suffered in this way and that the Church repeatedly has been obliged to insist upon a golden mean and to maintain the right understanding

of the Eucharist in all its fulness and in correct proportions.

A comparison of this present chapter with the foregoing one furnishes an historical proof of this judgment.

In proportion as stress has been laid upon the abiding presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, there appears an increasing tendency to augment outward splendor and thus to externalize eucharistic piety. Eucharistic adoration becomes mere love of ceremony and display without true inward devotional value. We have seen people flock to a solemn eucharistic service in honor of the Resurrection on the night of Holy Saturday, and go from church to church to enjoy the experience again and again, and then fail to go to Mass on Easter Sunday!

This suggests a second consideration. Emphasis of the abiding presence has done some harm to the proper appreciation of the Mass, whether because we lose sight of the deepest significance of the Mass as sacrifice-oblation, or because the Mass comes to be regarded as no more than the process by which the eucharistic presence is effected.

Again, all absorbed in the thought that the Eucharist is the presence in our midst of the heavenly Lord, the so-called "devotions for Communion" departed more

and more from their natural primary source, the Holy Mass. The very Lord Whom people so ardently desired to unveil and to behold in the Blessed Sacrament, Him they actually received less frequently in Holy Communion. Herein is the saddest feature of the mediaeval eucharistic movement; it carried the neglect of Holy Communion to an extreme. At the very time when there was no end of desire for outward eucharistic splendor—the laity received Communion only once in the year.[36]

Furthermore, the multiplication of these new eucharistic solemnities had the effect of estranging the faithful from the liturgy, which is always the normal official prayer-life of the Church, and from the consciousness of the communion of saints. So far did this go that the liturgy, which was once the common property of all in Christ, today is hardly understood and used except by the clergy. This is quite true of the Divine Office or the Hour Prayers and was true until recently even of the Mass which the priest celebrated at the altar while the laity prayed their own "devotions for Mass." What a loss this is can be appreciated only by one to whom the liturgy in its breadth and depth is a well-known and beloved land.

And finally, one more danger is this that as devotion tends to stress the divine nature of the eucharistic

[36] See above in Chapter IV.

Christ, it tends to rest there with Him and no longer sees Him as the way to the Father, the ultimate source of all life. Christ the Mediator and Redeemer becomes Christ the royal Lord of Heaven. And while Christ is indeed true God, the Church has always regarded the emphasis of His divine nature in practical devotional life as a partial and inadequate view portending harm in right devotion to the Holy Trinity. Christ Himself always directed us to His Father. St. Paul continually speaks of Christ as the way to the Father. And the Church, as we have seen, always fashions her prayers and her worship according to this same thought. This is the deep reason for her wise reserve in all matters of eucharistic adoration and for the precedence which she gives to liturgical prayer over non-liturgical eucharistic services.

If we mistake not in our reading of the signs of the present time, the turn of the second thousand years will bring about a change in viewpoint and a gain in Christian consciousness (and consequently in devotional life and divine worship) which has heretofore been withheld owing to the emphasis of the sacrament-aspect of the Holy Eucharist rather than the sacrifice-aspect.

The Christian mind of the present day shows a strong trend back to liturgical prayer, a tendency to

stress the sacrificial character of the Eucharist, and is disposed to restore eucharistic adoration to its proper place in the ensemble of divine worship.

Transition periods of this kind are always apt to bring about a certain state of tension. The older ideas resent the advance of newer ones, while these latter press forward with appeal to a still older tradition. In such cases there is danger that parties will form and that strife will cause a narrowing of vision. A good knowledge of the sequences in the history of religious devotion will enable us to meet these difficulties and to attain the desirable end.

Let us be glad and grateful that we live in a period which has been blessed with deeper insight into the secrets of eucharistic devotion. Let us strive to honor our eucharistic Lord both in private and in public and in our turn to live out the words of the angelic doctor and the poet-laureate of the Eucharist:

*"All thou canst, do thou endeavor,*
*Yet thy praise can equal never*
*Such as merits thy great King."*

## Chapter VI

### Plans for Eucharistic Scheme of Life

*"Pursuant to the admonition of Pope Pius X, 'not merely to pray during Mass but to pray the Mass, those entrusted with the care of souls, knowing well the force and merit of the present liturgical movement, will do their best to ensure the closest possible participation of the faithful in the prayers of the Mass as uttered by the priest at the altar. And the partaking by the whole congregation of the sacrificial banquet after the communion of the priest is a custom of ancient Christian times of deep significance and should be revived wherever circumstances permit."*

Resolution of the diocesan synod of the archdiocese of Cologne, 1922. (Köln, 1922, Bachem, p. 45, n. 4.)

Add to the directions contained in this resolution the prescriptions of the Church's code which declare that the liturgy, even in its non-eucharistic parts, must be given preference over non-liturgical eucharistic devotions,[1] and we are furnished with a fundamental outline of a eucharistic scheme of life.

Let us say at the outset of this chapter that in the considerations which are to follow (in which we pass from the general to the particular) we have in mind ideals the realization of which may meet with obstacles

[1] Canon 1268.

arising out of present ways of thinking and present circumstances and customs. Hence we hope that what we are to say will not be regarded as a plea for innovations and alterations which do not reckon with present actual conditions, or whose introduction in a hasty and drastic way would certainly be unwise if the pastoral care of the clergy does not first prepare the way and if intelligent understanding on the part of the laity does not ensure the gradual and safe attainment of the goal. At the same time, however, it is equally important that our ideals be right ones, containing the intrinsic energy that will assure their realization. A glance at the religious literature of our day shows that forces of this kind are actually at work on all sides, so that we are justified in saying that the eucharistic-liturgical movement is no longer a matter of question. It is now a fact, a vital and powerful fact. It is thoroughly in accord with the mind of the Church and enjoys the Church's endorsement and guarantee.

Our fundamental principle must be: "The Mass above all"—above all other forms of worship, above all other services and "devotions," above all other gatherings in church whether eucharistic or non-eucharistic, above all sublimities of religious emotion,

whether amid the beauties of nature or in the interior life of the soul, above all forms of liturgical worship not simply, but as the crown of all, as their ideal and liturgical climax.

And when we say: the Mass, we mean the Mass as the great sacrificial action of the whole united Church, the communion of saints, united action not merely in an abstract and legal sense, but the visibly united oblation made by the whole congregation of the faithful, a solid group, conscious of their wider solidarity in the whole Church throughout the world and with Christ the Lord, the head of the Church, and thus one corporate agent in word and deed. We mean the Mass as the liturgical, sacrificial drama enacted by the Church as a community, not the Mass in the sense of a juridic representation of the community by a priest and an altar-boy, but the Mass in which the whole community takes active part and carries out the prayers and ceremonies as the liturgy supposes and prescribes. This may be either, and best of all, in the rich variety of antiphonal chant and prayer and ceremonial of a High Mass (the Church's idea of what a parish Mass should be and for which the Low Mass is only a substitute in case of necessity), or in the proper liturgical Low Mass with prayer recited and action performed in a community manner.

We must learn again to understand and appreciate the Mass as the Sacrifice of the New Covenant, to understand it as an oblation in which every one of us has his part.

Are there not, alas, too many of the faithful to whom one of our "devotions," especially with Benediction attached, means more than the Mass does? All honor to our "devotions"; but in these "devotions" no matter how utterly we "give ourselves" to God, the gift remains that of the creature's own personal self, whereas in the Mass our oblation is that of the united body of the faithful made one in our High-priest, Jesus Christ, "by whom we have access to the Father" (Eph. 2:18). And Benediction, while fraught with blessing, for it is the pleading of the Bride of Christ, still remains no more than the voice of the Church and must rank lower than the Mass. For in the Mass we are united directly with Christ Himself who binds us with Himself in one oblation and brings us to the Father, and no other ceremony can compare with this, the very center of all Christian faith and worship. And if there are a considerable number who quite fail to grasp the difference between the Mass and a "devotion," doubtless a still larger number prefer the "devotion" because they understand the prayers and because the alternating and congregational prayer and chant

actually grips their soul and enables them to take active part with heartfelt devotion.

To imagine that one is unworthy, because conscious of one's sinfulness, to take part in the actual offering of the Mass, is to betray an altogether erroneous conception of the Mass. The chief of the Apostles tells us that all the faithful are "a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," a "chosen nation" and a "kingly priesthood" (I. Pet. 2:5, 9), words which are deeply significant as regards the participation of all in the Sacrifice of the Mass, and an idea which the liturgy bears in mind as well as it does that of personal unworthiness.

This over-stressing of one's unworthiness may also be a sign of an excessive individualism which is quite foreign to the spirit of the liturgy. For according to the liturgy our individual souls are assumed into the communion of saints, into the mystical body of our Lord. And through Him and with Him we are admitted to union with God in the heavenly company of true adorers. It is proper to call to mind in this connection the phrase "the poor in spirit" (in the sense of the truly humble of heart), for they precisely are the ones ripe for the kingdom of heaven.

Nor is it a correct understanding of the Mass to imagine that its purpose is merely to effect the real

presence of the eucharistic Christ for the sake of Holy Communion and of adoration, or to imagine that it is proper to spend the time during Mass in the recitation of all sorts of prayers, including such as should properly be recited in common at other times and at other services for which they are intended.

It is evident therefore that the practice of receiving Communion before Mass, which has become almost the rule in many places, is intrinsically inappropriate and should not be continued. Simply consider for a moment how those who communicate before Mass assist at the Mass itself. From the beginning of the Mass to the Consecration they are engaged in prayers of thanksgiving after Communion and they feel no desire and have no opportunity to attend inwardly to the progress of the Mass. At the Consecration they merely renew their adoration of the divine Lord in the Holy Eucharist. After the Consecration they either prolong the same kind of adoration prayers or they recite other prayers which have no connection with the Mass. At the priest's Communion they do not fail to practice the much-recommended "spiritual communion." At Masses of obligation they aim to obey the precept of the Church by attending briefly to the "three principal parts of the Mass," the Offertory, Consecration and Communion. With souls orientated in this way the sacrifice-aspect of the Mass is reduced

to a minimum, nay is lost sight of altogether, in favor of the sacrament-aspect. All this is very distressing to the priest who celebrates the Mass, especially in cases, as in convents, where the entire congregation receives Communion before Mass and consequently ignores and neglects the Mass as a sacrifice.

When the Church calls us, let us say to a May-devotion, we expect a service of prayer and song in praise of the Mother of God and in supplication of her loving intercession. We expect to find priest and people united in the rendering of prayer and homage. We would be astonished were we to find the prayers of the priest disturbed by the interference of other prayers of alien purpose said aloud by some other person, or drowned out by congregational prayer or singing. And yet when the Church calls us to the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, that most sacred and solemn drama of salvation which should be enacted by the whole assembly of the faithful, we find almost invariably that the thoughts and words and chant of the priest on the one hand and of the people on the other proceed in two distinct directions and that private or congregational "devotions" are permitted which have no connection with the Mass or at most only an artificial one.

What wonder then if the Mass is not appreciated as

it should be and if many prefer a devotional service in which they can distinguish unity of plan and harmony of parts. What wonder if the half-hour is spent (doubtless more often than is commonly imagined) in the recitation of a "devotion" or of miscellaneous prayers in an effort to put the time to some use.

We must look these and kindred facts in the face in order to understand the widely-growing demand that the Mass be restored in its fulness and in order to carry out the desire of the Church expressed in her various exhortations to the effect that we should "not merely pray during Mass, but pray the Mass," that is, unite "as closely as possible in the prayers of the Mass as uttered by the priest at the altar," and "acquire the true spirit of the Christian religion from its primary and indispensable source, which is the active participation in the most holy mysteries and the public and solemn prayer of the Church."[2]

Verily, to stem the tide of the present day which is bearing great numbers not merely into the zone of practical indifference but out of the Church altogether, we need to sound a rallying cry to all, to the whole-hearted and the half-hearted, to the steadfast and the wavering, to those who stand aloof and to those who have fallen away: "Celebrate the Mass as the Mass,

[2] Pope Pius X; see *A. S. S.* 36, 1903, 388.

and ground your religious life at the very center of Christian faith and worship. Enter and participate in its sublime dignity and its noble harmony, its beauty, its consummate art. Experience its depth and its breadth, its fecundity and its blessedness. Live out once more your 'royal priesthood'; know again that you are one with Christ and His Church; rejoice in the 'liberty of the children of God' and in your vocation as the 'princes of God's creatures.' "

Well then, let the question be asked: "What actual participation does the liturgy expect of us?" The answer may be summed up in these words: the participation of joint-agents in oblation and prayer.

It will not be superfluous to remark that the Church does not recognize any celebration of the Mass other than the liturgical one.[8]

The liturgy expects us to take active part in the Mass as joint-agents in the oblation. Before beginning the Preface, the prelude of the great eucharistic prayer, the priest calls out to the assembled faithful: "Pray brethren, that my sacrifice and yours may be

[8] Accordingly the prayer-books prepared by diocesan authorities show an increasing tendency to bring their so-called "devotions for Mass" into closer relation to the liturgy; whereas there are many prayer-books which give us "devotions" rather than Mass prayers. And unfortunately there are still, in spite of consequences and in spite of the wishes of the Church, many who prefer their own ways and their favorite private devotions.

acceptable to God the Father almighty." At the Memento for the Living he prays: "Be mindful, O Lord, of Thy servants and handmaids . . . and of all here present . . . for whom we offer, or who offer up to Thee this sacrifice of praise. . . ." And again, immediately before the Consecration: "We therefore beseech Thee, O Lord, to accept this oblation of our servitude, as also of Thy whole family. . . ." And even after the Consecration, when our divine Lord is present upon the altar and is both the Oblation and the High-priest of our Sacrifice, we still speak of the active participation of all the assembled faithful: "Wherefore, O Lord, we Thy servants, as also Thy holy people . . . offer unto Thy most excellent Majesty, of Thy gifts and presents. . . ."

Hence we are justified in likewise regarding as spoken by all the faithful the rest of the Mass-prayers which are in the plural number: "We pray Thee, we offer, we praise Thee," etc. And why then should not all the faithful actually speak them? The whole content of the Mass-liturgy is the common prayer of all who are present and not a private concern of the priest. In other words, the liturgy expects us all to take active part in the official prayer of the Church.

Therefore be it said once more: all honor to the

Church's "devotions," but everything at its proper time. Let us find some other time for the Rosary, the prayers in honor of the saints, sodality and confraternity prayers, and whatever else of such kind we have been using so frequently during Mass. If there be no alternative let us omit these altogether rather than omit the Mass prayers. We must not imagine that we shall gain a quicker hearing from God in our needs by filling up with anxious pleading for some mistaken interest of our own soul the time which ought to be devoted to the unselfish honoring of God and in which Christ Himself becomes our high-priest and our companion and leader in the praise of the Father. Let us remember His own words: "Be not you therefore like to them (the heathen); for your Father knoweth what is needful for you before you ask Him" (Matt. 6:8).

We cannot here describe and discuss at length the particular modes of popular participation in the prayer and oblation of the liturgy.

As regards the High Mass, the outward participation is largely and plainly indicated by the liturgical chant. The question might still be raised as to why, for example, the Canon is begun before the Sanctus chant is ended, since the Sanctus is really the end of

the Preface.[4] In the case of such pieces as the Offertory chant and the Communion chant it is proper that the Mass proceed while these are being sung because according to ancient custom these pieces were intended precisely to fill the time required for the offering of the oblations and the distribution of Holy Communion.

For the Low Mass that manner of assistance should beyond all doubt be preferred in which we actually "pray the Mass," that is, we should use the very prayers which the priest prays at the altar and not some unofficial "devotion for Mass." The actual Mass prayers can be had by anyone of the faithful in the various editions of the Missal which have been prepared for the laity and which furnish a translation for those who do not know Latin or who have not a good

[4] From the liturgical standpoint it would certainly be preferable to finish the chant of the Sanctus before beginning the *Te igitur* of the Canon. The oldest Roman *ordines* expressly have it so. And Pope Pius X in his *Motu Proprio* on church music of the year 1903 says that the priest at the altar should not be delayed in the liturgical action by music of undue length. But since the rules prescribe that the Sanctus end before the elevation, the celebrant should also bear in mind the part of the singers. (See *A. S. S.* 36, 1903, 393; and also the *Ceremoniale Episcoporum*). The recent decision of the Congregation of Rites, that the second half of the Sanctus chant (*Benedictus qui venit*) is to be sung after the Consecration, is due to the fact that the modern lengthy Sanctus music interfered with the Consecration. If the second part is to be sung after the Consecration, it would be all the easier to finish the first part entirely before beginning the *Te igitur*. It cannot be objected that there would result a long period of silence, for the idea is that the Canon should be prayed in silence.

command of it. Happily the number of those who use the Missal is now very large and is constantly increasing. At the same time it is the duty of the priest at the altar to bear in mind those who are praying with him and he will thus be guarded against the temptation to read the Mass prayers too rapidly.

In Germany the "Sing-messe," or Low Mass with congregational hymns and prayers, enjoys considerable popular favor and naturally there are those who strongly advocate it. Whether arranged with hymns only or with alternate singing and recitation, it undoubtedly does express the thoughts of the liturgy in a manner suitable and profitable for simpler people. In some cases the "Sing-messe" is arranged so as to correspond quite well with the liturgy. In other cases there is adaptation to the particular feast or season but not to the sequence of the Mass. In these cases we are simply back again to the "devotions," which are not the Mass. The character of the particular feast is to be expressed in the introductory part of the Mass, the Mass of the catechumens. In the sacrifice itself the main thing, which absolutely must be expressed, is the act of sacrifice, and whatever hymns are introduced in this part must accord in wording and music with the liturgical drama that they accompany. For example, what relationship at all is there between an Ave Maria or a hymn in honor of St. Joseph or St.

Aloysius introduced just before the Consecration, and the Church's deep intent at that moment when she implores the coming of the eucharistic Lord, the perfect Oblation of her sacrifice? If it seems necessary to give expression to the character of the particular feast by some extra-liturgical hymn, then let such hymn be added properly at the end of the Mass and it will echo in the hearts of the faithful while they return to their homes.

Various attempts are being made in recent years to restore at Low Mass some visible union between priest and people corresponding to that of the proper liturgical High Mass, in order to cultivate by outward exercise that spirit of social solidarity and Christian brotherhood which the liturgical prayers suppose. Thus we have what is called the "recited Mass" or the "dialogue Mass" (missa recitata, missa dialogata). These efforts are fundamentally worthy of the highest commendation for the Mass in its prayers and ceremonies is community drama.[5]

We cannot here discuss or venture a decision in regard to the various methods that are proposed. The Congregation of Rites has decreed against certain

[5] They are also entirely in accord with the regulations of Pope Pius V.

detail suggestions which go too far.[6] The custom of praying the Secrets and the Canon from the Sanctus silently (or in a whisper) is a tradition which goes back to Christian antiquity. There are good intrinsic reasons for adhering to this tradition. The deep reverence and awe which man feels and expects in the presence of divine things has always prompted to silence. Hence it is undoubtedly preferable that in the solemn and inspiring moments preceding and following the Consecration our prayer should be in silence though none the less the united prayer of all.[7]

There are those at the present day who seem to feel that standing at Mass is not a proper attitude. However, they are wrong if they allow the feeling of reverence and adoration toward our Lord in the Eucharist to outweigh entirely the thought that we come to offer a sacrifice. The only attitude for public Mass, whether for priest or people, that can be inferred from the liturgical prayers is that of standing erect. St. John

[6] *A. S. S.* 1922, p. 505. Compare the explanations given by the Abbot Ildefons Herwegen, OSB., in *Köln. Volkszeitung*, 1922, N. 779. In regard to this decree, the diocesan synod of Cologne says: "The introduction of the so-called missa recitata requires a special episcopal permission." The diocesan synod of Malines (1922) recommends the missa recitata especially for schools and religious communities.

[7] For the same reason recitation of the Canon prayers aloud by a leader in congregations of adults and young people is not to be recommended, even though the prayers are only a paraphrase of the liturgical ones. With congregations of children it may be advisable to permit the recitation of prayers aloud by a leader for pedagogical reasons.

Chrysostom considers that the standing attitude at Mass is not merely the proper thing but, one might say, something essential. For he concludes from a text of the Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. 8:1) which speaks of Christ as seated at the right hand of the Father, that the God-man does not continue to offer sacrifice after His ascension into heaven. Those who wish may argue that the custom of kneeling throughout the Mass (a custom in Germany especially) represents a logical development; but they should not condemn the opinion of those who for liturgical or other reasons prefer the standing attitude or a combination of standing, sitting and kneeling.

The sacrificial banquet is an integral part of the Sacrifice of the Mass. All the faithful, as they are joint-agents in the sacrifice-oblation, have also the right and should naturally have the desire to partake of the sacrifice-banquet. For a thousand years in the Church's history the only mode of Communion for those who were able to be present at Mass was Communion as unmistakably a part of the holy Sacrifice. And with the revival of active popular participation in the Sacrifice as of old, there arises also the desire for the restoration of the practice of "sacrificial Communion." For more than one reason it deserves to be "revived wherever circumstances permit."

The liturgy to the present day regards Holy Communion as the banquet portion of the Holy Sacrifice. Once we have restored popular participation in the Mass-drama, we shall also understand and receive Holy Communion as a part of the Mass. In this sense we speak of "the liturgical conception of Holy Communion".

Let us consider briefly the subject of preparation and thanksgiving for Holy Communion.

It is quite a common thing to hear people complain of a lack of variety in the prayers which are suggested to them in preparation for Communion, and there is repeated demand for new forms and new content. Yet no such complaint comes from priests, although the priest repeats day after day the self-same prayers of the liturgy in his preparation for Holy Communion. And again, are there not many who feel some sense of guilt if they fail to go through the routine series of acts of faith, humility, contrition, desire and love before and after Communion, in other words if they fail to employ some particular "devotion for Communion"?

The only real solution of these difficulties, paradoxical as it may sound, is to be found in the injunction: "not to pray during Mass, but to pray the Mass."

There is no prayer so well suited to all varieties of character and disposition and class and age and voca-

tion as the liturgical prayer of the Mass itself. No other prayer so well expresses the intrinsic relationship between Holy Communion and the Holy Sacrifice and therefore furnishes so excellent a preparation for Holy Communion.

What we need is to learn to assist at Mass correctly and to understand and receive Holy Communion as a part of the Mass.[8] And then these difficulties will quickly disappear.

But many a one will read through the Mass prayers and ask: "Where do they contain a preparation for Communion? Up to the Agnus Dei which immediately precedes the Communion there is practically no explicit mention of Communion."

Now, that very searching is a mistake to begin with, for it supposes that Holy Communion is the goal of the soul's effort and that the Mass is simply a means toward the attainment of Communion. Whereas the fact is that the liturgy, the official prayer of the Church, always subordinates Communion to the Sacri-

[8] Happily there is a growing custom, especially at Children's Mass, of reciting aloud and in common the Mass prayers either actually or approximately in their liturgical wording. And how sad to hear the children at Communion time protesting aloud their unworthiness to receive the divine Lord sacramentally, and giving expression to desires which are not sacramentally fulfilled. Let us advance a step farther and give to the faithful, including the lambs of the flock, the whole Mass as our Lord intended it and as the Church offers it.

fice. Communion is God's gift to us in return for the gift which we offer to Him in the Mass.

And this being the case, the best kind of preparation for Communion is surely not one that concentrates our attention upon ourself, nor even upon the gift which we expect. For that would be simply the seeking of self at a time when our purpose ought to be the honoring of God. Let us therefore concentrate our attention and effort upon the gift of homage which we bring to God in the Mass and let us receive His gift in return as something undeserved and in a certain sense unexpected. Anyone who has really attained that inward disposition which makes his own person a worthy offering in the sight of God is by that fact well prepared to receive God's counter-gift. In the Sacrifice of the Mass we make of ourselves an "acceptable oblation" precisely by union with Christ. And certainly we are thereby prepared to receive the same Christ when God offers Him in return under the eucharistic species.

And yet we shall find, no doubt with glad surprise, that the Church's liturgical preparation of the offering of her Sacrifice includes those very acts of faith, humility, contrition, desire, hope, love and self-oblation which our many modern devotional books prescribe as acts before Communion—but with this great

difference that the liturgical Mass prayers are never extravagant and unnatural. Moreover, the official liturgical prayers are motived and sustained by a general spirit of thanksgiving; the central portion of the Mass prayers has always been called the great eucharistic or thanksgiving prayer; the note of thanksgiving is dominant throughout the Mass-text, whereas the devotional books introduce it only after Communion. And finally it should be observed that in the liturgical prayers all the efficacy which the devotional books teach us to ascribe to Holy Communion, is attributed equally to the Sacrifice of the Mass.

Preparation for Communion is not therefore what many anxious souls imagine; otherwise it would be necessary to go to Mass twice: once to assist at Mass as the Mass, and again to prepare for Holy Communion. No, indeed! The Mass itself is the liturgical, the official, and hence the best way to prepare for Communion. And if we shall have to center our religious life a little less in Communion and more in the Mass, so much the better. For the Holy Sacrifice, whose immediate purpose is the honoring of God, is objectively of higher value than Holy Communion, whose immediate purpose is the welfare of our souls. And acts of faith, humility, desire, hope and love do not lose anything of their force (either absolutely or as a preparation for Communion) by the fact that they

are, as in the Mass text, primarily oblation prayers. Remember that this is the Church's official way, the way prescribed for her priests—and the Church is guided by the Holy Spirit.

But where will one find all these acts furnished by the liturgical text? Is it really necessary to point them out? Let our answer be likewise in interrogative form.

What is the whole introductory part, the Mass of the catechumens, if not a continuous and solemn act of faith? The Epistle and the Gospel are instructions in faith. The Credo is a public confession of faith. Can the desire for the eucharistic Lord and Saviour which is repeated again and again in the prayers before the Consecration be voiced without kindling of faith in the eucharistic mysteries? And after the Consecration every sentence of every prayer is a confession of faith in the Eucharist.

Is there any deeper and more sincere act of humility than that contained in the prayers at the foot of the altar and especially in the Confiteor? Can anyone declare his unworthiness before God more emphatically (without becoming forced or unnatural) than the Church does in the Confiteor and in the petitions of the Offertory and in the prayer before the Consecration in which she begs God's blessing upon our inade-

quate offering of our poor selves and the whole unworthy assembly? Even after the Consecration, when our Lord is present upon the altar, Himself our perfect Oblation, do we not still implore the heavenly Father to receive our Oblation in spite of our own unworthiness and to deign to accept the same upon His altar on high? When the thought of union with God in everlasting bliss inflames us with desire, do we not still confess ourselves His sinful servants? And so onward to the Communion, every prayer is an act of humility, a confession of our unworthiness before God and particularly before the eucharistic Christ.

And if love which has not yet gained possession of its object reveals itself in desire and hope and longing, then once more, every prayer from the Offertory on is an act of true Christian love of God and love of the eucharistic Saviour. And to love means to offer oneself, to wholly give and dedicate oneself, to devote oneself entirely to the service of the Beloved. Throughout all the Mass prayers the devout soul offers one continuous act of love, a deep and heartfelt love, a love that commands one's entire life, a love that is not and cannot be satisfied with a mere "essential" and minimum disposition but aims and strives for perfect self-oblation, for union with God and total devotion to His interests, a love that cannot rest until it reaches the closest union that is possible in this present life,

that interior and exterior union which, as faith tells us to our joy, God in His infinite goodness has made possible for us in Holy Communion.

Thus there is no authorized requisite for a good preparation for Communion which is not to be found in the liturgical Mass prayers. And moreover, the liturgical prayers accord with our human nature and have not that hard, schematic character, that rigid formality which sooner or later must oppress one with monotony.

How can this be, you may ask, if Sunday after Sunday, and indeed day after day throughout the year, we are to have no other preparation for Communion than the Mass prayers, the self-same prayers day after day?

It will be found that the liturgical Mass prayers afford the richest and most pleasing variety. For to a certain extent each day has its own Mass. The introductory portion especially varies from day to day and gives to each day something of a distinctive atmosphere and character. Moreover, we ourselves are never quite the same on two successive days and the liturgical prayers possess a peculiar and wonderful adaptability which suits them to our ever-varying moods, to the ceaseless flow of our cares and needs, our desires and petitions, our joys and sorrows, and always in an intimate and personal way in every one who lets his

soul be filled and guided by the spirit of the liturgy. The liturgical prayers, while in good part the same in wording, always seem new and delightful to the one who prays them, always able to give appropriate expression to the manifold movements of the soul.

As regards thanksgiving after Communion, here too the prayers of the liturgy should have preference before all others. They are not long, but they are rich in content and full of inspiration. And let us not hesitate to say them promptly with the priest even though we have just received our Lord in Holy Communion.

Our thanksgiving should be not for the grace of Communion only but, as the Church wishes, for the whole Sacrifice of the Mass. The prayers which are added at the end of the Missal and suggested to the priest for his thanksgiving after Mass, make the thanksgiving to be not for Communion but for the Sacrifice.[9] And what holds good for the priest holds good for all who are joint-agents with him in the Sacrifice. Surely it is a great favor to each one of us to be permitted to unite with our Lord Himself in offering the Sacrifice of Redemption. And there is no need to say that our gratitude will include thanksgiving for the boon of Holy Communion.

[9] *Cod. Jur. Can.* Canon 810.

And here, after Communion, each soul has free field to follow the promptings of his own gratitude and love and to find the personal expression that seems best to him. It is due no doubt to some suggestion of the Holy Spirit that the time occupied in distribution of Holy Communion has no congregational prayer appointed by the liturgy (except the Communion antiphon which is sung by a choir). For thus each soul may speak from heart to heart with the Saviour in these moments of intimate union. And as the custom of congregational Communion as an understood part of the Mass becomes more general there will be ample time for private prayer before the end of Mass. We say this not in order to oppose any other custom nor to set limits to private prayer, but in order to encourage in this respect also the revival of the custom of Christian antiquity which made the liturgy the *lex orandi,* the norm of prayer.

In this connection something should be said in regard to the practice which some people follow of "offering up" (as they say) their Holy Communion for a certain intention or for certain persons.

What is the meaning of that phrase: "to offer up one's Holy Communion? The word "Communion" here has two possible meanings. It may mean, first, the subjective act of communicating (and this is the

more personal meaning), in which case to "offer up" means just what it means in the case of any good work, namely, that one offers to God for some definite intention the satisfactory and impetratory merits (applicable to other souls) which he gains (ex opere operantis) from Holy Communion. Or it may mean, second, the eucharistic Lord Himself, whom the recipient offers to the heavenly Father after Communion.[10]

In both senses the practice is a modern one and it has become rather widespread especially since (although independently of) the Communion decree of Pope Pius X. When Holy Communion is conceived as an independent value apart from the Holy Sacrifice (as the various "devotions for Communion" lead one to conceive it) there is a natural tendency to want to "offer it up." For man greatly desires to have something that he may offer to God and on given occasions is pleased to be able to show his good-will and his interest in the welfare of others.

What is to be thought of this practice? There can be no objection to it, theoretically or practically, any more than to any similar offering up of any good work. Nor can anyone be forbidden if in the joy

[10] See the excellent treatment of this subject in *Theol. Quartalsch.* Linz, 75, 1922, p. 82.

of giving he offers to God the eucharistic Saviour in the moments after Communion when our Lord is so closely united with the recipient. No one need deny himself these pious acts of private devotion if he feels inclined to them.

But we are interested here in the eucharistic-liturgical aspect of the question. And from the viewpoint of the liturgy it is better not to evaluate Communion apart from the Sacrifice of the Mass and it is better not to "offer it up" in that way. Is not every part of the Mass a good work? But who ever thinks of offering up the Gospel? And if it be said that Holy Communion is a sacrament, then once more: who ever thinks of offering up a baptism or a confession or a marriage? And yet these can be "offered up" as well as Holy Communion. We should indeed offer up our Holy Communion; but we should offer it as a part of the Sacrifice of the Mass (that is, we should understand the Mass for what it really is, namely, the offering of the eucharistic Saviour and of ourselves in union with Him); and in this way our purpose will be attained in a more beautiful and significant and effective way than by the mere "offering up" of Holy Communion, for a private devotion is not to be compared with the great Sacrifice of the New Covenant.

One cannot help but feel that this practice of "offer-

ing up Holy Communion" could not have arisen were it not for the fact that the faithful have largely lost the understanding of the Mass as the oblation of the united Christian eucharistic family. Sacrifice-oblation and sacrifice-banquet are in danger of having their roles reversed in consequence of the one-sided and exclusive emphasis of the latter. The understanding of the Mass as an oblation has been obscured and Communion as an oblation tends to take the place of the Mass, whereas this latter oblation cannot compare in meaning and value with the former one. With the revival of the liturgical understanding of Holy Communion as a part of the Mass these questions will settle themselves. We shall offer first and last the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and in it the sum of all our offerings without any lessening of our private devotion.

The Church, knowing well how essential to the Christian religion are the Mass and Communion, has seen fit to prescribe a minimum of assistance and reception. She obliges the faithful to assist at Mass at least on all Sundays and to receive Holy Communion at least once a year. But anyone who has the true Christian spirit will not be satisfied with the mere fulfillment of this obligation in regard to Holy Communion; he will recognize that the eating of this heavenly food is a vital necessity of his spiritual life which

may be likened to the need of bodily food in ordinary life.

While placing these obligations the Church also expresses her urgent desire that the faithful live in close union with the eucharistic Saviour, so that their life may deserve to be called a eucharistic one. She recommends especially the frequent, yea the daily assistance at Mass (or better the daily participation in the Mass), the receiving of Holy Communion whenever one takes part in the Mass, and the visitation of our eucharistic Lord in the course of the day according as personal and outward circumstances permit.

But she leaves us full liberty in these things, not commanding, nor urgently pressing, nor prescribing anything as specific proof of true eucharistic piety and zeal. Anyone who is enlivened and moved by a true love of our eucharistic Lord will find love prompting him to the right way and the best method. He will make use as he pleases, outside of liturgical services, of the practices and devotions which Christian love has originated and propagated, without burdening his soul or hindering the free flight of his affection.

A goodly number of persons today find that they have no taste for the eucharistic devotions and practices which many of our prayer-books suggest to them. They fail to find in these a real stimulus to love and

real help in the ways of self-oblation; and yet they are afraid to give them up and to speak to our Lord as their own soul dictates. Yes, and there are some spiritual directors who seem to think that everything depends upon the exact observance of forms and formulas and whose tendency is to fetter the free aspirations of the soul. This is a very serious mistake.

A great doctor of the Church once said: "Love God —and do as you please." Yes, love the eucharistic Lord; learn to love Him for all the blessings which He dispenses from the altar to yourself and to all mankind—and rest confidently in His love.

And then, whether from far or near, your thoughts and desires will always hover about the altar, His dwelling place who is the God of infinite graciousness and your dearest friend. Your feet will often find their way to His all-holy sacramental presence; your knees will bend in reverence; your eyes will dwell with longing; your heart will expand with desire. Your soul will hearken for those accents of love which are inaudible, and yet you understand them; will look upon deeds of love which no outer eye may see, and yet you behold them; will be enfolded in an embrace which no bodily sense can feel, and yet it fills all your being with delight; yea, your very body will be uplifted to share in the rapture of your soul; divine love will

flood your entire being and you will experience the truth of the Psalmist's words: "O taste, and see that the Lord is sweet" (Ps. 33:9).

A holy solitude will wrap you round, the solitude of love, laden with mystical secrets that are veiled from all others as in a holy shrine. In your silence and littleness you will leap with exultation; in your abandonment you will overflow with thanksgiving; in your poverty you will be rich and will have much to give—for the Lord is your fortune, and of His goodness and plenty there is no end.

Human love has its abysses and dangers as we know from history and from daily experience. If you would be guarded from these let the Church be your teacher and the liturgy your norm of eucharistic love. Let the liturgy be as the sun of your eucharistic life, giving light and heat and power. The liturgy will teach you dignity of manner, will carry your sentiments aloft to the purest heights, will fill you with a love that is deep and true, the love which Christ Himself maintains in the Holy Eucharist.

The secret of God's love lies in its power of imparting itself, a power which in God's own inner life produces a divine Personality, the Spirit of Love. Let the secret of our eucharistic love be likewise in our

power of giving forth love, a power which through God's goodness and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass returns and reaches to the very heart of God.

Joy is the crowning of all life. And true to the words of our Lord: that "it is a more blessed thing to give, rather than to receive" (Acts 20:35), the giving of self to God brings joy and dispenses blessing. "The holy Sacrifice of the Mass is a festal thing and bespeaks the greatest joy in the Church."[11]

May our eucharistic life issue forth from the altar of sacrifice and return to it; may the Mass be its center and source of power; may it radiate from this center to the heights of heaven and the ends of the earth. "Through Christ our Lord; by Him and with Him and in Him, is to Thee, God the Father almighty, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honor and glory; for ever and ever."

[11] Pope Benedict XIV, *De Ss. Sacrif. Missae*, l. 3, c. 15, n. 14.

## Chapter VII

### Eucharisitc Education

*"Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come to Me, for the kingdom of heaven is for such."* (Matt., 19:14.)

Perhaps the Apostles thought that the Master was too tired after His day's work to concern Himself with children. Or perhaps they considered that He had more important things to do than dispense those little joys that children love; or that He was altogether too great to stoop to the things of childhood. Whatever it was that they thought—this tender scene from the Gospels is typical of the respective attitudes of the child-mind and the grown-up-mind toward what is high and noble, toward our divine Lord and Saviour, and toward the eucharistic Christ.

A grown-up person, provided his spiritual sense has not been dulled, has a hesitating reverence before whatever is exalted and divine, sometimes to such extent that there is no place left for any feeling of intimacy and his only concern is to show respect where it is due. But the child's nature is so essentially intimate that when the age of reflection comes, with its "may" and its "must," the flower of childhood loses its bloom. Of course the child has a sense of reverence, but its reserve has not yet been reduced to rule, and

its lovingness, its naive forwardness, its guilelessness usually prevail over its timidity, very often to the astonishment of the grown-ups who exclaim at such lack of respect. Alas, that in the commercial atmosphere of our self-conscious modern world many children are not left free to enjoy this paradise of childhood.

The religious trend is part of the child's nature. Even the supernatural world, once learned of from elders, seems quite natural and self-evident to the child and is accepted without problem or question and with an assurance such as the mature Christian with ripened knowledge and deep spiritual experience can hardly equal. Understanding religious relationships according to the measure of its own familiar world, the child grasps the concept of the fatherhood of God according to its dear knowledge of what "father" means in the family circle. The divine Saviour is like an older brother, and the Child Jesus is a dear little brother. All of the child's religious processes and prayer notions are fashioned in this intuitive way. And how much rich promise of religious life is blighted in the bud by the unwise efforts of adults to impose upon children their grown-up ideas and ways, which are incomprehensible to the child,—this is a question that will be answered never in this world but only in the next.

The first Christian centuries may be thought of as the period of the Church's eucharistic childhood. The Christians of those days, and the children especially, must have dwelled in a eucharistic paradise. Children received their first Communion at the time of their Baptism, in the Mass which immediately followed the baptism ceremony. And they regularly ate and drank at the table of the Lord, being permitted, in a way that children love, to have their own eucharistic banquet after that of their elders.

But as the Christian mind penetrated more deeply into the nature of the Eucharist and became more reflective and self-conscious, this happy period of childhood came to an end. When grown-up Christians thought it proper to refrain from frequent Communion out of greater respect—what hope was there for the child? There are many of us who remember the time when children received their first Communion about the end of their years of primary school. And First Communion Day was made so solemn that no room was left for a child's intimate ways, and many a child got the notion that all subsequent Communions must be the same, if not in outward ceremony at least in inward solemnity. Our children today want to have their feasts in their own way, in the ways of childhood and youth; and we shall have to arrange our Communion ceremony in a similar way, or it will do the

very opposite of what we wish and of what we have been trying to attain in our very grown-up wisdom and by our over-conscious "laws of psychology."

The Church, the perennially youthful Bride of Christ, has repeated the Saviour's wish by the mouth of Pope Pius X, for the mind of the Church regarding children is that of the Saviour and not that of the grown-ups. The Code of Canon Law states that Holy Communion should be received when the age of reason has been reached.[1] There is a considerable difference of opinion as to what that age precisely is. And there seems to be a sort of agreement that ten years is a suitable age for first Communion. It is true that a child of seven is not capable of adequate ethical distinctions, such as, especially, the distinction between mortal sin, in the sense of a willful turning away from God, and venial sin. Nevertheless, the debate of grown-ups over the age for First Communion does remind one of the Gospel story of our Lord and the little children.

However, we may hope that a eucharistic springtime for the children is not far way. Perhaps one might not think so from the many complaints we hear that children are losing their sense of reverence and devotion. But may it not be that we are attributing to

[1] Canon 859.

the child our own grown-up self-consciousness? May not the faults of our children be due to inadequate education at home and in school? May it not be that the great Lover of children, now as in the Gospel story, loves the unspoiled and artless child more than the one that comes to Him with the manners and disposition of the adult?

And we grown-ups—may it not be that we need to learn all over again? Our preceding chapters have shown us something to that effect. Why then do we wish to burden children, like little Davids, with the armor of Saul, when we ought to know that they will have to lay it aside again, and with it lay aside their love and taste for Holy Communion, perhaps for the rest of their life?

If it is true that we have emphasized the "sacrament-aspect" of the Eucharist at the expense of the more fundamental "sacrifice-aspect," that we have seen in the Eucharist the adorable divinity of our Lord rather than His loving-kindness and helpfulness as our Mediator; if it is true that the dangerous possibilities inherent in the thirteenth century eucharistic movement are being realized more and more,—then it is high time that we begin to provide our children from the very start with right understandings of the Holy Eucharist. And if we must confess that home

and school have somewhat failed to give the right instruction for the reason that we ourselves were not taught aright, let us resolve that our children shall not be obliged to go by the same circuitous ways that we have gone.

Did we not all grow up more or less in that state of mind which is found underlying the so-called "devotions for Communion"? In spite of all the emphatic things that were said about the efficacy of the Mass, was not the Mass to us a mysterious something which each one tried to deal with in his own way—rather than the liturgical and eucharistic sacrifice of the communion of saints? Did not our eucharistic education deal one-sidedly and almost exclusively with Communion understood as an act of adoration and with the abiding presence? At the time of our First Communion what did we know about the Holy Mass beyond that it was the way by which Holy Communion came to us? What did we know of it as the Sacrifice of the New Covenant and how little did we understand that to participate in the liturgy of the Mass was the deep and vital concern of every one of us and of all of us together. Our First Communion instructions and the devotions for Communion did not mention these things. The whole catechism course on the Eucharist dwelt almost exclusively on Holy Communion and the Real Presence, with the Sacrifice of

the Mass mentioned in a supplementary way and without conveying any idea of its supereminent religious significance. One might almost say that we were shut out from the eucharistic paradise, before whose portals stood the angel with the flaming sword to command our reverence.

In recent years there has come a radical change. It is quite generally recognized that we adults must learn all over again, and this is the first step toward a new system of eucharistic education. In Germany the New Catechism has broken with the modern tradition and has gone back to the ancient one. In the arrangement of the matter it follows the pre-tridentine theologians and the Canon Law. After an introduction on the Promise and the Institution of the Eucharist, it treats of: (1) the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, (2) Holy Communion, the food of the soul, (3) the Real Presence, the perpetual dwelling of the Son of God among men. This is the order that derives from the very nature of the subject. For from the Sacrifice comes the Sacrament; and this Sacrament of the altar has the peculiarity of being an abiding one.

Eucharistic education must therefore deal with all three aspects of the Eucharist and as far as possible must follow this given order which is the logical one. And from beginning to end it must be catechetical (or dogmatic), liturgical and moral, so that faith, worship

and our entire religious life in Christ and in the communion of saints may be nourished and perfected by the Eucharist. Eucharistic education in the home must partly precede that in the school, and partly accompany the latter and supplement and enliven it.

The outline for catechetical instruction on the Sacrifice of the Mass as furnished in the New Catechism, is very satisfactory.[2] Attempts have been made recently to spiritualize or to "de-materialize" the concept of sacrifice, and perhaps with a somewhat dangerous tendency to make the act of sacrifice a mere symbol, to reduce it to a mere act of renunciation, or to submerge it in the "mystery-idea." The New Catechism on the contrary holds to the traditional concept. It states: "Sacrifice is the offering to God of a visible gift in order to render Him homage as supreme Lord." The inward and symbolic values that are contained in the outward oblation of visible gifts, or that may be connected with it, depend upon the cultural condition and the liturgical customs of a given people, and must not be allowed to alter the fundamental idea nor to

[2] See Kramp, *Die Messopferlehre des Einheits-Katechismus,* in *Katechetische Blätter,* 51, 1925, p. 161. The book of Jul. Pott, *Vorbereitung auf die erste hl. Kommunion,* 2 ed. Paderborn, 1909, has many excellent features but is very inadequate in its treatment of the fundamental point of the nature of sacrifice. The author does indeed give prominent place to this point, but he introduces all possible metaphorical uses of the word sacrifice, to such extent that one might even regard confession as a sacrifice. This necessarily produces confusion.

reduce it to a mere word. Therefore, no matter what may be said, the Christian sacrifice-concept means ultimately just one thing, namely, the offering to God, in homage to Him as supreme Lord, of the sacrificial body of Christ once offered on the Cross of Calvary and as such made present on our altars.

By using illustrations taken from the Jewish and Pagan sacrificial customs, it should not be difficult to explain the idea of sacrifice clearly to children, and to give them a vivid and inspiring consciousness of the supereminent value and the unique signficance of the Christian sacrifice, and to point out to them the festal character of sacrifice so that they will understand the reason for beauty and splendor in the outward ceremony.

Regarding liturgical instruction on the Sacrifice of the Mass, the new educational plan tells us: "The outward structure of the Mass-drama and its inner meaning should be explained to the children, as well as the Mass prayers and chants, so that they may be enabled and accustomed to unite in spirit with the priest at the altar and to offer the holy Sacrifice in union with him." Of course this must be done according to the capacities of the children in their various grades.

The liturgical explanation of the Mass must naturally begin with the explanation of its visible features

which appear directly to the senses. In large cities where for various reasons it is impossible for all the children to view the Mass ceremonies at close range, experience shows that excellent results are obtained by the use of lantern slides. Stationary slides are better than motion pictures because there must be an accompanying oral explanation.

For little children the explanation may be confined to the separate visible ceremonies, with only so much attention to their co-ordination into one whole and to their deeper unity as is proportionate to the interest and intelligence of the little child. In treating of the idea of sacrifice and its application to the liturgy of the Mass, one should dwell especially on the idea of oblation, and show that what we offer to God in the Mass is our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The easiest and best way to bring home to the little child the meaning of oblation, is no doubt the illustration of a gift-offering which a child makes to its parents. This will impress upon the child the important truth that oblation is a gift-offering, and will avoid the juridic difficulties involved in the notion of a transfer of possession to God, Who is already the owner of everything. From first to last throughout all the instruction on sacrifice, on the Mass, and especially on the liturgy of the Mass, it is very important to keep

clearly and constantly in view the primary and strict meaning of oblation as the offering of a gift. To introduce all sorts of metaphorical uses of the word oblation (such as: self-denial, renunciation, effort, giving food to poor children, helping mother in her work, being obedient, etc., etc.) is to do harm by creating confusion in the mind of the child.

We must remember that there are certain common uses of the word sacrifice (such as: to make a sacrifice, to sacrifice an object or an interest, to become a victim of one's convictions or ideals or calling, to require the sacrifice of this or that, etc., etc.) in a sense far from identical with the strict sense of a sacrifice to God. In the former cases the word is used metaphorically (a custom, it seems, not older than the eighteenth century) and on the basis of what is only a partial note of the sacrifice-concept, namely, the renunciation which is involved in giving a thing to someone else.

And next, it is important to insist from the very start and to explain that the Mass is offered not by the priest alone but by all the faithful, including the children. The gift which we offer to God is quite as much the gift of the children as of the adults and the priest. And hence from the very beginning of their instruction the children should be taught "to unite in spirit

with the priest at the altar and to offer the Holy Sacrifice in union with him." The particular liturgical texts[3] which make this plain should be explained to them so that they will take a personal interest in all the ceremonies, even though they do not yet clearly understand their co-ordination into one whole. One may call attention to the role of the Mass-server and tell the children that that position should not be regarded (as alas it often is in fact) as the privilege of a favored or a remunerated few, but that all are in very truth Mass-servers and that it is due to the exigencies of space that a few must be chosen to actually serve at close range. And one may also call attention to the ancient custom in which all the faithful brought their offerings of bread and wine, and point out that our present Offertory collection is not merely a material necessity but is a relic of this beautiful and significant ancient custom.

One will soon be able to carry the instruction on to the symbolism of the oblation and to explain that with the Offertory gifts we offer ourselves. Catechists will here find ample room to introduce those ethical and ascetical applications which they usually are fond of making, and to point out the ascetical values contained in the oblation concept. But they should be on their

[3] See Kramp, *The Liturgical Sacrifice of the New Law*, St. Louis, Herder, 1926, p. 67.

guard against the danger of going too far afield and losing sight of the primary significance of the oblation symbolism, that is, the oblation of oneself to God and to His service. It is quite proper to explain the metaphorical senses of oblation, but with due care so that these will illustrate and culminate in the actual strict meaning of oblation, namely, the offering of the gifts and of self to God.

In explaining to little children what it is that we offer to God in the Mass, let us be content for the start to teach them that we offer Christ, our Lord and Saviour. The reason for this is, firstly, in order to impress indelibly upon the child's mind this profound truth which means so much in our entire religion, and secondly, because little children are not yet able to understand the more elaborate combinations of ideas and the more intricate meaning of the Consecration in the Mass liturgy. However, it is important, in explaining the Consecration and the Elevation, to make clear from the beginning that the chief thing here is not the adoration of our eucharistic Saviour, but rather something that may be expressed as follows: We wish to offer a gift to our dear God; but we have nothing of our own that is worthy of Him. And so the good Saviour comes to help us and becomes present on our altars under the appearances of bread and wine so that He Himself may be our

gift to God. The priest shows Him to all who are present, as if to say: "See how our Saviour helps us by coming Himself; now we have a gift worthy of God. Behold Him, the Saviour of the world. Pray to Him and offer Him to the heavenly Father."

When the children are old enough to understand and to receive Holy Communion, it becomes a very important matter to explain to them the connection between Oblation and Communion. They must be taught the meaning of Sacrificial-Communion and educated to receive the eucharistic Saviour in that understanding.

It is easy to explain to children the connection between Oblation and Communion as being the simple relation of a gift and a counter-gift. Apart from the general ethical lesson herein contained, namely, the need of giving as well as receiving, it is very necessary to impress upon them at an early age and for their whole religious life a right knowledge of God, so that they may think of Him not merely as One Who only gives and is always expected to give, but as our Lord and Father Who also receives from us, to Whom we must give adoration and self-oblation, Who provides all things for us if we give Him the homage that is His due. There is probably no better way of forming in our young people the permanent habit of frequent

Communion than just this explanation of the connection between Oblation and Communion. When the knowledge of this once dawns on them they feel almost obliged to partake of Holy Communion as often as they participate in the Holy Sacrifice. Experience shows more and more that children are quite capable of a deep understanding of this connection between Oblation and Communion and that it fills them with joy.

In this way we arrive gradually and almost imperceptibly at a point where we may give the children a connected explanation and a general survey of the entire Mass liturgy. Here again we should begin with a running treatment of the outward structure or the visible features of the Mass, explaining the meaning of these one by one and deepening the child's understanding by illustrations taken especially from the Old Testament. We should then go on to explain the liturgical prayers and chants. And finally we may take up the inward plan of the liturgical drama and the framework of its inner structure.

For this it is primarily important that the teacher be thoroughly enlightened in the subject and animated with a contagious enthusiasm. I have dealt with this matter in the preceding chapters and also in another

book (*The Liturgical Sacrifice of the New Law*)[4] and hence I need not take long at present. The explanation had best begin with the Offertory. For the introductory part, or the Mass of the catechumens, is simply a preparatory prayer-service. Its purpose is to elevate the soul to the mood of the particular feast or season and Mass of the day, and especially to enable the soul to make the offering of self with fervent and generous devotion and in a new and varied manner day by day. There is especial danger here that the teacher in explaining the details of the Mass of the catechumens may fail to make clear its connection with and relation to the Sacrifice of the Mass. The structure of the introductory portion must be explained by reference to the Jewish synagogue service and to the developments of Christian worship in the first Christian centuries.

The plan of the sacrifice portion of the Mass is as follows: "O Lord, our God, we bring Thee bread and wine as our gifts and as symbols of ourselves. Look graciously upon them and bless them (Offertory). Mindful of Thy Son's bidding to renew His Last Supper, we thank Thee for this grace by which we are enabled through Jesus Christ to offer Thee an acceptable sacrifice (Preface) and we pray Thee, in union

[4] St. Louis, Herder, 1926 Chap. IV.

with the whole Church, to change our gifts of bread and wine into His sacrificial body and blood so that they may become a welcome offering in Thy sight (Canon before the Consecration)." Then the priest, acting in the name of Christ, speaks the words which bring about the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the selfsame Oblation of Calvary (Consecration) and joyfully lifts the same aloft to be seen by the awaiting faithful (Elevation). Now we all unite again with the priest and with our High-priest, Jesus Christ, and finish the oblation-drama. "O God, our Father, possessing now Thy Gifts, we offer them to Thee in reverence and thanksgiving. Receive them, heavenly Father, the holy Bread of eternal life and the Chalice of everlasting salvation, Thine own beloved Son, Jesus Christ, and ourselves too in Him (Canon after the Consecration)." The sacrifice-oblation is followed by the sacrifice-banquet. We have offered to God the best that we have, our gifts of bread and wine and our own selves and our Saviour, and now God gives us in return the best He has, His beloved Son, our Lord, under the appearances of bread and wine (Communion).

Our liturgical instruction cannot discuss the opinions of theologians on the various theories of sacrifice. We must confine our explanation of the Consecration

to what is given us by the liturgy. Christ, our Lord, becomes present under the eucharistic species as our sacrificial gift. He Who once offered Himself on the Cross in the great sacrifice of human redemption, again offers himself to his Father in the Mass through the priest. We must be careful to avoid everything that might give to the children the notion (contrary to the teaching of dogma) that our Lord actually suffers in the Mass, or that He sacrifices Himself in the sense of renunciation, etc. We must always keep clearly before them that Christ is offered in the Mass as the glorified Saviour, now incapable of suffering, and that the Mass in its liturgical form is primarily a eucharistic or thanksgiving sacrifice. The renewal of the Sacrifice of the Cross in the Mass must not be conceived as a renewal of the actual sufferings of Christ's passion and death, for the Mass is an unbloody sacrifice, a food-oblation. Therefore, while pictures and illustrations which recall the Crucifixion may well be used, it must be with care so as to avoid giving the children a false impression.

In liturgical matters above all, instruction should be joined with practice. For the service of God is in deed and in life. Children must learn in a practical way to take part in the Mass as a sacrifice, meaning both High Mass and Low Mass. Where there is a special Mass for the children it should be now one and now the

other, so that the children will not later be left helpless by themselves.

It is to be regretted that we have not as yet agreed on even one Mass text for children which may serve as a preparation for the regular and intelligent use of the liturgical text. And it is also to be regretted that many of our present Mass texts for children are lacking in that feeling of reality which our youth of today values so highly; sometimes because in every Mass which is not the appointed Communion Mass the children are made to say: "Since I cannot now receive Thee sacramentally" (although it is really very hard to see what is to prevent in the case of most of the children); or at other times because at the Communion the children are expected to make acts of contrition and humility so worded as implying that most of the children have recently arisen out of mortal sin. However, we must admit that it is difficult to accustom the child's mind and will to things which are intended at one and the same time to suit his present needs and to furnish him with example and direction for his entire life.

Ethical instruction regarding the eucharistic sacrifice must start out from the principle which underlies all religious life, from the great fact of our obligations to God, our Lord and Father, which find their ex-

pression in homage, reverence and service. If these fundamental things are not deeply planted in the child's conscious life, the work of the teacher will be all in vain; the child will follow so long as it must, but when free to do as it pleases will throw off what it has always regarded as a dull service and a hateful burden.

Therefore it is all-important to gradually awaken in the child's soul the right idea of God, and to impart to the young mind as its life-property those immutable laws of religious life which hold us voluntarily beneath the loving authority of our heavenly Father. The child must learn to think of God in His infinity and incomprehensibility, in His holiness and benignity, as the Creator and the source of all being, as the ideal and goal of all desire and endeavor, as one whose biddings and commands proceed from an intrinsic reason and not from arbitrary impulse, as one who deals in love and perfect justice both with good and evil. It is probably true to say that most cases of going astray or of falling away in religion are owing in last analysis to a wrong notion of God somehow received in childhood, causing the child to think of God, for example, as a kind of "tyrant," or in other cases as a sort of "benevolent old man".

When the right idea of God has been implanted in the child's soul, a true devotion arises spontaneously

and inevitably and shows itself in reverence, homage and service. And from such disposition it is only a step to the comprehension of sacrifice. For homage and gift of homage are closely related. And the way from homage-gift in general to eucharistic gift of homage should be a way sown with the blossoms of contentment and happiness, of confidence and thanksgiving. For the Christian sacrifice is excellent above all others and is the sure and open road to that union with God for which mankind never ceases to yearn. The way of the eucharistic Sacrifice brings us to God in fullest truth and in the company of our Redeemer. But, let us insist once more, an acquisitive and grasping spirit will not bring us to that end, but only the spirit of self-oblation; we shall attain the height only by reverent service; bliss is won by the performance of duty.[5]

The question may here be raised as to whether eucharistic education in the narrower sense should begin with the idea of homage to the eucharistic Christ or with the idea of the eucharistic Sacrifice.[6] We know that the latter was the method in the ancient Church and for a thousand years in the Church's history. Whereas we of today were brought up accord-

[5] See Kramp, op. cit. Chap. V.

[6] See the noteworthy article of Eggerdorfer, *Eucharistische Erziehung*, in *Katech. Blätter*, 50, 1924, 81.

ing to the former of these two methods; and this may account for that disproportion in our eucharistic knowledge and devotion of which there has recently been considerable complaint.

It is quite true that we shall not be able to explain to children that the eucharistic Christ is our sacrificial gift to God the Father, unless we first explain our Lord's real presence in the Eucharist. But the real presence simply, is not the same thing as the abiding presence, and the adoration of our Lord in His eucharistic presence is a third step.

The New Catechism shows us how to proceed in this matter. For in its instructions on the Sacrifice of the Mass, it is content to explain first of all simply the fact of our Lord's real presence. If we place eucharistic adoration too much in the foreground of the child's mind it is quite likely that we shall slight the importance of the two other and more fundamental aspects of the Eucharist and really make it more difficult for the child to understand the entire subject. Experience has shown that children grasp the idea of sacrifice-gift more readily (and joyfully) than many people imagine. This is quite natural in cases where home life and home customs have acquainted the child with the ideas of gratitude and of gift-giving to father and mother.

The catechetical instruction on Communion will naturally have to do with the nature and effects of Communion, with the requirements for receiving Communion and the reasons for frequent Communion. The catechism gives a satisfactory treatment of these points.

Special consideration should be given to the question of the effects of Communion, because this question is altogether too much overlooked in practical religious life. Many people think of Holy Communion in a partial and one-sided way as simply an act of adoration of our eucharistic Lord. And apart from that, there are many who have grown up in the notion that there are certain values that must be derived from Holy Communion and that these are entirely according to the personal effort made by the recipient and defined in resolutions and promises. This is an instance of what may be called a purely utilitarian point of view, a thing which does great harm throughout religious life. Many seem to forget that Holy Communion, like all the Sacraments, works "ex opere operato" and that the fruits resulting from personal effort are not so important as those produced by the Sacrament itself. This must not be taken as meaning to depreciate in any way the importance of personal effort, but simply as a warning against an over-estimation of

personal effort and against a utilitarian understanding of Holy Communion.

The chief effect of Holy Communion is and must always be the union in love with Christ, and the same must be our chief purpose in receiving Communion. Unfortunately in our practical religious life we have to a large extent lost sight of the meaning of certain great truths which are our traditional inheritance, namely, the communion of saints, the mystical body of Christ, the organic union of all Christians in Christ as branches of the one Vine. Hence the chief effect of Holy Communion is not vitally understood by many. Eucharistic education must give more attention to these fundamental truths, must implant them as a deep and conscious possession in the child's spiritual life, must point out more explicitly this supreme ideal of Christian life, so that the right understanding of Holy Communion may become universal.

We do give considerable attention to the matter of preparation for and thanksgiving after Holy Communion. I have spoken of this in the preceding chapter. Would it not perhaps be better, would there not be a richer and more noble fruit, if we would strive to bring home a deep and living consciousness of our Christian union as co-heirs with Christ, our Lord and Saviour—a union which is revivified and enlarged in

depth and height every time that we receive Holy Communion. We must recognize as the permanent and immovable foundation of our religious life the really fundamental truth of the union of the soul with God by faith, hope and love (a union both objective and subjective, and described by our Lord in the Gospel of St. John and by St. Paul in his Epistles). That is what we must emphasize, rather than those specialties of private devotion which many are fond of cultivating, but whose attractiveness and power are likely to prove rather ephemeral, and which in any case do not produce the anticipated fruit because the actual soil has not been sufficiently cultivated.

The union in love with Christ which Holy Communion effects is something both objective and subjective. And in the supernatural life of grace the objective side is of primary importance. The objective workings in this case are of such nature that we may not be consciously aware of them, and hence no doubt many do not sufficiently appreciate them. They produce an increase of sanctifying grace and a peculiar anchoring of the soul in Christ, and consequently a weakening of evil inclinations and a strengthening of good ones, a remission of venial sins and a strengthening of the soul against mortal sin. This should be kept in mind in our preparation for Communion in order to

attain the best possible attitude of will and to secure us against undue anxiety.

Holy Communion is the food of the soul; and like all food its effect is to cure, to strengthen, to promote growth and to bring to perfection. Ordinary food is assimilated and taken up into the life of the organism which it nourishes. But the Eucharist, the food of the soul, elevates the soul itself to its own level, for the Eucharist is grace, it is life, it is Christ.

The way of the Eucharist, like the way of all religious life, is the freeing of the soul from itself, the elevation of the soul and its assimilation into the divine. Hence the soul should not attempt to achieve this consummation by itself and in its poor human ways. Rather it must be freed from self, it must forget self, must lose itself in God, seek God and find Him, and then to its wonder find itself again in Him. The teacher must insist continually and unceasingly on this fundamental principle of all religious life (and surely including eucharistic life) as he wishes to perfect souls in union with the eucharistic Christ.

The catechetical instruction on Communion must certainly be completed by liturgical instruction and practice. The children must learn that Oblation and Communion are two parts of one whole and that Oblation is the primary one. First Communion instructions

have hitherto overlooked this part of the task, indeed have quite neglected it; and consequently we have grown up with a certain conception of Holy Communion which now fails to satisfy us. I have discussed this point in an earlier chapter, and in the present chapter in the outline for liturgical instruction on the Mass, Communion is included at once as a part of the Mass.

Experience has proved that the connection between Oblation and Communion can be made so clear to the children that its consequences will simply shine forth, and without any question the children will spontaneously reach the conclusion that one should receive Holy Communion as often as one participates in the Holy Mass. Let them carry that thought into their life and there need be no fear of any later falling away from frequent Communion. And if this thought once becomes a general one, vividly and vitally, then we shall experience a eucharistic spring-time in which the partaking of Sacrificial-Communion will become as much a matter of course as it was in the early Church, and more than can be brought about by any number of eucharistic sodalities and confraternities.

Holy Communion is not merely a matter of the individual's inclination or need, it is the public affair of the body of the Church. In all religions that had

sacrificial customs, the sacrifice-banquet was understood as a matter of course. This is true, objectively, of the Christian religion also (as St. Paul explicitly teaches in his First Epistle to the Corinthians); and it remains true, as far as the Church and her liturgy are concerned, to the present day. But as far as conscious knowledge goes, on the part of most of the faithful, and, alas, of too many of the clergy, the sacrificial character of Communion seems to have been forgotten very considerably and is recently coming back to recognition.

If there has been neglect of Communion, let us trace the fault to its roots. Let us plant the seed of the Church's liturgical understanding of Holy Communion in the soul of the child at its first approach or before its first approach to the table of the Lord. The tree of true eucharistic devotion will thrive in this fertile soil and will bring forth the fruit which Christ, our Lord, and His holy Church expect. And let us give the children the opportunity to put this conception of Holy Communion into exercise in and through the Holy Mass, so that our teaching and our practice will not go in two different directions.

Ethical education in regard to the right reception of Holy Communion must concern itself chiefly with the above-mentioned union with Christ in love.

The word love in this connection has been understood by many to mean that the soul must approach our Lord in Holy Communion impelled and sustained by conscious promptings of love, as to a union of mutual love. That is true as describing an advanced degree of spiritual and eucharistic perfection and an ideal for all Christians. But we must remember that it is an ideal and not a regular requirement for ordinary daily life.

The love which is essentially necessary in our relations with God and with the eucharistic Christ, is that which we possess when we are in the state of grace and so disposed toward God that we prefer His interests above any attraction that involves mortal sin. This is what theologians call the "love of benevolence," and it need not be sustained or accompanied by any emotional attraction toward God. Everything beyond this is matter of higher spiritual perfection and of love in a deeper sense. An emotional attraction is not the decisive thing, for that may be present even when grace has been lost. The important thing is the right direction of the will and the right general disposition. And if in addition to these we have the right immediate purpose (even though implicitly) there is nothing to prevent a good Communion. Such imperfections as vanity in wishing to be seen at Communion or the fear of seeming to be an exception by

staying away, do not render the Communion unworthy, although they do diminish its good effects.

It is important to stress the need of right disposition and intention, but the teacher must take pains to awaken sentiments of love rather than of timidity or fear. The child should not get the notion that his preparation for Communion must be measured by his emotions, such as fear and horror at sin or a joyful attraction to God. The proof of love is not in emotions of this kind, but in intention and conduct.

The teacher and director of souls in eucharistic life should avoid all exaggerations. Many extravagant things have been said and written about the joys of Holy Communion. And how often do we see something like this: "If one Communion in the life of a saint produced such wonderful effects . . . or if one visit of our Lord in his lifetime on earth raised a soul to such heights, . . . how should it be with us who communicate so often . . . or what must our Communions be if they produce so little fruit."

Sayings of this kind give false impressions and should be carefully avoided. Firstly, they call attention exclusively to purely subjective experiences which are not essential; and secondly, they imply that we should expect as daily occurrences very special graces of God or things that come as the result of long

effort and co-operation with grace. Grace builds upon nature, upon the nature of each single individual with its favorable and unfavorable qualities such as they are. Even the Apostles, chosen as they were by our Lord, and following Him voluntarily day by day for a long time, did not show themselves to be great saints at the time of His passion. Let us by all means give our children high eucharistic ideals—they cannot be too high—but let us not lead them into unreal ways.[7]

After what has been said in Chapter IV no more need be said now in regard to education for frequent and if possible daily Communion (or let us say for Communion as often as one participates in the Mass). Frequent Communion should be a self-evident thing in our eucharistic life, and in eucharistic education the only question is of the best ways and means to secure it. Experience has shown none better than the right explanation of the connection between Oblation and Communion.

Meanwhile one must not take the mere number of Communions and of eucharistic practices (i.e., mere statistics) as the measure of the encharistic life of an individual, a parish or a region. As Eggersdorfer rightly says,[8] religion is not a matter of arithmetic, as

[7] See the two encyclicals of Pope Pius X on Communion: *Sacra Tridentina synodus,* Dec. 20, 1905, and *Quam singulari,* Aug. 8, 1910.
[8] loc. cit. 82.

if one were to say that one Communion being good, ten Communions are ten times as good. In individual cases much depends upon one's education in childhood and upon influences which cannot easily be set aside in later years. And it is quite probable that many people "of the older fashion" (while their way is less good objectively) with their three or five Communions a year on the great feasts, are to be rated higher religiously than some who communicate daily. In the case of communities, statistics will have some value only when the Communions are classified and when the number of daily communicants, and especially those of religious order groups, are reckoned separately from the rest. Statistics alone are not a sufficient proof. The depth and vitality of eucharistic disposition is an equally important consideration. And where that is rightly cultivated, where the children are brought up to understand the matter as it has been here explained, frequent Communion will come as a matter of course.

The third general division of eucharistic education is that regarding the eucharistic adoration which is the necessary consequence of the perpetual dwelling of the Son of God among the children of men. We have already seen, especially in Chapter V., how deeply the Church is concerned to foster and promote such adoration, what practices she especially recommends and

what limits she wishes to have observed.

Young people usually find a distinct attraction in the practice of visits to the Blessed Sacrament, both in private and in common, and they delight to see eucharistic worship conducted with extraordinary splendor on special occasions such as the Forty Hours or Corpus Christi.

The limitations placed by the Church in the matter of eucharistic adoration are set in warning against extremes, both in content and in form.

This does not mean that there can be any excess in the ardor or intensity of true devotion toward the Holy Eucharist. It means that our homage should not be directed exclusively, nor even primarily, to the divinity of our Lord in the Eucharist, but rather to Him as our Redeemer and Mediator, Whom St. Paul (with all his emphasis of the divinity of Christ) so strikingly calls: "the man, Christ Jesus" (I Tim. 2:6). In this point we must hold to a definite unity and uniformity of view, as has been insisted repeatedly in regard to Oblation and Communion. Christ is our Mediator and Redeemer, our Saviour and the head of the mystical body which is His Church. He is our food and our strength, He is the way and the truth and the life.

Excess in form means the emphasis of adoration above the other two forms of eucharistic service, Sacrifice and Communion, such as, for example, when for the sake of eucharistic adoration we relegate to second place a strictly liturgical service (even a non-eucharistic one like the Divine Office). Christ in His life on earth always subordinated Himself to the service of His Father, and it would not be right to wish to give Him direct homage at a moment when, in union with His Church, He offers service to the Father.

"All things are yours, . . . for you are Christ's, and Christ is God's" (I Cor. 3:23). Such is the way pointed out to us by Christ Himself, the way which the Church always points out and in which she walks in her liturgy. It is the way in which all eucharistic life should go and toward which all eucharistic education should bend its efforts.

"You are Christ's, and Christ is God's." All eucharistic education in its ultimate purpose is education to the true and genuine worship of God, which is and can be no other than the liturgy of the Church.

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